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ABSTRACT

This guidebook is designed to allow individuals to connect, sense and discover their feelings about the natural world and the environment. The guide may be used as a project or independent study in sociology, American studies, environmental studies, psychology, education, or anthropology. To use this material, one is to stop in a natural area, read one of the thought provoking statements called "Connectors," and write comments and observations in the workbook. This guide combines information about the environment with observations about feelings, sensations, and thinking, as well as suggestions for activities. (CW)

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THE WORLD PEACE UNIVERSITY FIELD GUIDE TO

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

- Creating Moments That Let Earth Teach

Michael J. Cohen

ACCLAIM FOR MIKE COHEN'S OTHER NATURE-CONNECTING BOOKS

"A fantastic book that's right on track."

Helen Caldicott, Author,
Nuclear Madness and Missle Envy

"The book possesses merit. It is about avant-garde environmental education and its fight to provide direct, hard-edged contact with the natural world while society fights it every inch of the way."

The Los Angeles Times

"A pioneer in the environmental education movement. Participant's learn to learn, learn that all subjects are interrelated with one another and themselves. Most of all they develop an interest in themselves."

The New York Times

"A worthwhile, thought-provoking, hard look at our relationships with Planet Earth as a living organism."

Marshal Case, Vice President, Education
National Audubon Society

"Each of us is a cosmic unit which can grasp the meaning of life. We need to seek harmony with our planetary home. This book blazes that trail."

Dr. Robert Muller, Former Assistant
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"Mike Cohen is a crackerjack teacher. What counts is that his words help us do what we must do to save ourselves and GAIA."

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"Valuable therapeutically and educationally. The reader gets to feel that he or she has experienced the in-depth search for real answers. I cannot praise the book highly enough."

Mrs. J. Watson Thomas, Psychotherapist

"It's a tale of our time. Its author is an expert in environmental education who asserts that nature is the ultimate measuring device! Read it and recycle some of your old opinions and perspectives."

Farmstead Magazine

"It sparked a deep appreciation, inspiring me to salute the Earth as a great creature, a might evolving, growing, feeling and being organism with a life of its own."

Helen Nearing, Co-author
Living The Good Life

"Important reading for everyone...Once I picked it up I didn't put it down until I read the last sentence. Its critical topic is interwoven with the author's first-person accounts. Mike uses down-to-earth language and humor to tell a vital story. As a professor, I'm tempted to assign this book to all I meet."

Clifford Knapp
Outdoor Education Faculty
Northern Illinois University

"Delightful, illuminating communication at its best--containing stories and guidance for experiencing Nature in the full thrill of her presence. Playful, scientific, but not academic. Take it and read!"

Dr. Thomas Berry
Founder and Director
Riverdale Center of Religious Research

"This is not a reading experience, it's a hologram. It is communicating through talking leaves, something of what whales communicate to each other...you are there."

Robin E. Lagemann
Indigenous People's Activist

"One cannot--and should not--attempt to escape the depth of concern, commitment and feeling of this book. It offers great food for thought, approaching a banquet."

John Disinger, Professor
School of Natural Resources
Ohio State University

A FIELD GUIDE TO

CONNECTING WITH NATURE

Michael J. Cohen, Ed. D.

World Peace University

A Center of the University for Peace, United Nations
Eugene, Oregon

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To Cliff Knapp
who helps put into words what our inner Nature knows.

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FOREWORD

Outdoor persons, socially and environmentally concerned individuals, and those who care about Nature within and without, treasure this guidebook.

In every natural setting, from backyard to backcountry, this guide provides deeper ways of knowing Nature. To use it, stop in attractive natural areas, read the Connector(s) and write your comments in the generous margins and spaces provided, or in a separate journal. You may enjoy mak g your entries in this Guide in the form of drawings, writings, descriptions, tracings or other remembrances of your activities. You may need additional writing space in another notebook or journal for some Connectors. The Guide may be applied to already established nature trails by placing correspondingly numbered trail markers at appropriate places for its activities. Use it alone, or better still share each of its events with others.

Uniquely, CONNECTING WITH NATURE combines information with feelings, sensations and activities. Therefore, reading its pages without doing its activities may make the text appear impractical, extreme or repetitive. Usually there is little correlation between information and behavior; however, this Guide blends these two to produce useful learning. Pace yourself. Use the Guide slowly as time and interest permit. The later Connectors build from experiences with the earlier ones. For a synopsis of the Guide's general thrust, read Author's Observations on page 79.

We welcome learning of your suggested additions to the Guide and hope to let others know of them.

The supplemental readings at each chapter's closing refer to the Stillpoint Publication edition of HOW NATURE WORKS: REGENERATING KINSHIP WITH PLANET EARTH. It is available from bookstores, libraries or World Peace University.

Students may use this Guide as a project or independent study in Sociology, American Studies, Environmental Studies, Psychology, Education or Anthropology courses. Two units of academic credit are available through World Peace University for writing your reactions to this guide in essay form. For further information see About The Author on page 84 and write World Peace University, Box 10869, Eugene, OR 97440.

INTRODUCTION

"The major problems in the world are the result of the difference between the way nature works and the way people think."

--Gregory Bateson

The awesome perfection of wild, exotic Nature completely boggles the mind. Great thinkers of the world consider Nature to be "the garment of God" or "God's art, reflection or thoughts."

Sometime in the ancient past, modern society, to its cost, disconnected from the ways of the natural world. We replaced natural relationships and communications with the laws and abstractions of our civilization. That replacement separated modern people from Nature's wise, balancing forces.

Devoid of Nature's harmonics, the modern world has uncontrollably gone astray. Detrimental social and environmental activities steadily increase. It is as if modern society has invented a car without brakes.

For your enjoyment and growth, the activities in this book reconnect you with Nature's balance. They enable you to bond with the natural world.

* * *

During the past three decades I have not been separated from Nature. Uniquely, I have lived outdoors through the seasons. I have slept under the stars while developing educational programs that establish close, healthy, person-planet relationships. I learned and have come to teach Nature's language. For this reason, in November 1988, World Peace University, a Center of the University for Peace, United Nations, commissioned me to write this Guidebook, for it shares some of my Nature connecting knowledge and activities.

CONNECTING WITH NATURE draws from my National Audubon Society and Trailside expedition experiences as well as the workshops of 16 outstanding outdoor and environmental educators. By placing strong sensations of Nature into your awareness, it adds new dimensions to visiting natural areas.

* * *

The statement "when you pick a flower you trouble a star" beautifully infers that in Nature everything is interconnected. The great naturalist John Muir, echoing Chief Sealth, substantiated this, noting that in the natural world when you try to move one entity you find that it is "hitched" to everything else. Today, modern science confirms these observations. It recognizes Nature as a global life system, an Earth community of which people are part.

In order to be part of a life system, any entity, human beings included, must in some way be in communication with that system. Otherwise the entity may, to its cost, stray from it. This Guide connects modern people with Nature's communications and ways. In so doing, it harmoniously plugs us into Nature, and Nature's harmonics into us.

We are excessively separated from Nature because our society lives inside air-conditioned cement, plexiglass and steel. There we learn to know the world mostly using only four senses: sight, sound, rationality (logic, science and research) and language (abstract symbols, words and images). These four senses powerfully imbue our thinking. They overshadow our awareness of Nature's 49 other stabilizing senses that exist within and about us. For example, most modern people know a colorful nesting songbird not by enjoying it, but rather by somebody telling them about it.

CONNECTING WITH NATURE scientifically teaches our senses of rationality and language to enjoy relationships with our many other natural senses. This introduces Nature's balance into our frantic lives.

Michael J. Cohen, 1989

IMPORTANT: MANY OF THE GUIDE'S ACTIVITIES INVOLVE WRITING; YOU WILL NEED A PEN OR PENCIL AND A NOTEPAD OR ADDITIONAL JOURNAL LOGBOOK.

EXPERIENCING

"Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons. It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth."

--Walt Whitman

Many Connectors in this book call upon your image forming abilities, for as Albert Einstein noted: "Imagination is more important than knowledge."

Connector 1. Learning Fully: Experience is the best teacher because an experience consists of and includes many ways of knowing. Walk quietly into a natural area and note the multitude of thoughts, feelings and actions you experience.

In the space below, write the variety of diverse signals, tensions, and sensations you experienced in this area: colors, sounds, motions, desires, forms, breathing, images, temperature, thirst, wind, exertion, etc.

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Look at your list. Our ability to experience the world through so many senses is part of our biological inheritance that too often we take for granted.

The Nature of Senses

Each natural sense is Nature speaking to you, for each sense evolved in you to keep you connected with your rejuvenating origins in Nature. For example, the water in your body is part of the replenishing waters of the planet; you *sense* their disconnection as *thirst.* Oxygen in your body is part of the replenishing air of the atmosphere; you sense their disconnection as *suffocation.* Natural sensations are communicating connectors.

Connector 2. Natural Connectors: Over the aeons, through the natural senses, our mind and body have developed as part of Nature's global self-organization, perpetuation and regeneration system. These natural senses exist throughout our body and are entirely alive, remaining so throughout life if constantly used. *They are Nature connecting with itself in you. Sensations connect us to Nature, but they weaken or die if not exercised.*

Connector 3. Trust Your Feelings: Check yourself out. Validate that your senses work by noting that you can hunger, taste, thirst, touch, smell, hear and see as well as feel suffocation, pain, temperature, gravity, distress and the like.

Softly stroke your cheek and say: "Feeling is being." When you laugh say: "This feeling is real." Pinch yourself and say: "I feel, therefore I am." Continue doing these reality checks until you can truthfully say: "Feelings are experiences; sensations and feelings are facts. Sensation makes life worthwhile." Write this here and sign it.

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_____ _____

signature date

Write down what your life experience would be if you had no sensations and feelings. Would you be a machine? A barrel of words? An equation? Others?

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You are a sentient being. All sentient beings deserve to have good feelings, for in Nature good feelings indicate ongoing survival. To gain them, sentient beings trust *how they feel* and *act to sustain those feelings which are most comfortable.*

Your natural sensations and feelings are important survivalwise because they call your attention to the entities or situations that aroused them. Learn to trust your sensations and feelings in order to gain their guidance.

Connector 4. Writing And Discussing: Neither scientists, politicians, religious leaders, nor educators invented sensations. Nature did. *When you experience sensation you experience Nature in action.*

A vital way to know more fully any sense or feeling is to put it into words. *When you discover a natural feeling or sensation, write it down in the space provided and/or discuss it.* This is very important. It connects your educated rationality and language senses with your other natural senses. In time, this enables Nature to speak through your heart, thoughts and voice.

Connector 5. Sharing Nature:

Share a natural area with a partner. Hold hands with him or her and *without talking* one of you close your eyes. The other person becomes a Nature guide. For five minutes be led by the guide to sense, touch, feel, taste, smell and see glimpses of many different *natural* parts of this area which the guide selects because they attract him or her. The guide can move you close to any natural entity and place you in any position. He or she can signal you to open your eyes for a few secondsby squeezing your shoulder, and then releasing it to close your eyes again. After five minutes switch roles. Write down your thoughts and feelings from this activity here:

This activity balances our senses of symbolizing (speech), sight and rationality with our other natural senses.

"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions," wrote Oliver Wendall Holmes. People doing this activity discover many Nature connecting sensations which were often new to them. They have said:

"Even though I was blindfolded, I could sense there was a tree in front of me."

"I became aware of land and gravity through my feet."

"I could sense the direction in which I was going by feeling the sun on my cheek."

"I noticed many little things that would otherwise go unnoticed: a plant's coolness, masculine and feminine energies, different textures of the land."

"I felt greeted by Nature, developed a confidence in my other senses. Nature was directly showing me itself by sharing itself."

"I was able to turn off my internal dialog and sense that another world is here around me, that teaches beyond what I can imagine or express."

"I felt responsible for my partner and for showing Nature to its best advantage."

"I felt a humor and closeness, it got me out of my head world. I can't put the experience into words."

"I felt a curious anticipation, felt feelings of peace. I still have the memory with me." [Others have noted feelings of balance, belonging, warmth, thankfulness, comfort, happiness, contentment.]

"The world felt serene; I wanted to share it with my partner; I sensed a oneness with my partner and Nature; I heard and felt more intensely."

"I would have avoided the gentle stroking of leaves had my eyes been open."

"I sensed minute changes in the ground's texture and contours, and became aware of my inner Nature's automatic physical reactions to them."

"Guiding made things stand out, gave them and me a new purpose. I became conscious of the needs of the person I guided, as well as those of Nature."

"I felt an early apprehension, deep hesitancy and adjustment, then I relaxed and really experienced, really neat. It blocked out traffic noises."

"I leaned against a tree. I could hear my heartbeat and then I felt the sap of the tree flowing."
"I was able to sense color with my eyes closed."

"I lost track of time, felt I could taste the plants around me, sensed the weather and

temperature more acutely, felt a sense of humility, of being overwhelmed, became much more aware of form and designs."

"I felt more secure as I realized that I was part of this huge living being. I could truly experience my weight and how I reacted to gravity."

"I became more aware of my motions and the motions of things going by me. I could smell much more than with my eyes open, and could appreciate better when space existed."

"I felt a strong need and sense of balance. I could feel mood changes as we walked through the forest."

Connector 6. Consolidating:

> *"This session enabled me to recognize my sensations and feelings as an embodiment of Nature; they are Nature within me and I'm beginning to respect them more."*
>
> --Conservation Education Association workshop participant

Before continuing on to the next section, write here what you feel to be the three most important points of this chapter (including the Introduction):

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Supplemental Reading: The Mediated Pulse in HOW NATURE WORKS.

NOTES

SENSING

"The senses, being the explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge."
--Maria Montessori

This chapter presents Connectors that strengthen your natural senses.

Reminder: Most Connectors are experiences. Reading them without doing them and writing and/or discussing them reduces their effectiveness.

Connector 7. Sensing Moods:

Go to an inviting natural area. Sense and list here what makes this area attractive: color? sound? form? activity? beauty?

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Natural Moods: Near where you stand, the natural world produces hundreds of stimuli which touch various senses in you. It is worth repeating here that Nature's stimuli, sometimes called *entities, moods, atmosphere, or vibrations,* connect with natural parts of you *that are continuations of them.* For example: in the same way that your sense of hunger connects depleted parts of you with food:

-An entity's good taste usually tells you that it's edible.
-A bird in flight might arouse your senses of motion, freedom, awe, grace and beauty.
-The color orange might bring on feelings of dawn, orange juice and fire.

For your survival, each of these natural senses connects you to a part of Nature from which you biologically originated.

Connector 8. The Connecting Senses: Your sentient self, like that of many other species, contains as many as 53 senses from Nature. Trust these senses, they grew with life on Earth.

Familiarize yourself with Nature's 53 senses by reading the Affinity-Sensation Network list below. Write down or check off the senses that you feel are still alive in you.

THE AFFINITY-SENSATION NETWORK*

The 53 natural survival senses listed below connect Nature within to Nature without. They can be further subdivided into the over 100 senses felt by people who accurately predict earthquakes. Some senses are mysteries to us, but as Albert Einstein said: "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science." For example, blindfold people, away from home who have had magnets attached to thier heads can't point to home nearly as well as people without magnets on their heads.

The Radiation Senses

1. Sense of light and sight, including polarized light.
2. Sense of seeing without eyes such as heliotropism or the sun sense of plants.
3. Sense of color.
4. Sense of moods and identities attached to colors.
5. Sense of awareness of one's own visibility or invisibility and consequent camouflaging.
6. Sensitivity to radiation other than visible light including radio waves, X-rays, etc.
7. Sense of temperature and temperature change.
8. Sense of season, including ability to insulate, hibernate and winter sleep.
9. Electromagnetic sense and polarity, including the ability to generate current (as in the nervous system and brainwaves) or other energies.

The Feeling Senses

10. Hearing including resonance, vibrations, sonar and ultrasonic frequencies.
11. Awareness of pressure, particularly underground, underwater, and to wind and air.
12. Sensitivity to gravity.
13. The sense of excretion for waste elimination and protection from enemies.
14. Feel, particularly touch on the skin.
15. Sense of weight, gravity and balance.
16. Space or proximity sense.
17. Coriolus sense or awareness of effects of Earth's rotation.
18. Body movement sensations and sense of mobility.

The Chemical Senses

19. Smell with and beyond the nose.
20. Taste with and beyond the tongue.
21. Appetite and hunger.
22. Hunting, killing or food obtaining urges.
23. Humidity sense, including thirst, evaporation control and the acumen to find water or evade a flood.
24. Hormonal sense, as to pheromones and other chemical stimuli.

The Mental Senses

25. Pain, external and internal.
26. Mental or spiritual distress.
27. Sense of fear, dread of injury, death or attack.
28. Procreative urges, including sex awareness, courting, love, mating, paternity and raising young.
29. Sense of play, sport, humor, pleasure and laughter.
30. Sense of physical place, navigation senses, including detailed awareness of land and seascapes, of the positions of the sun, moon and stars.

31. Sense of time.
32. Sense of electromagnetic fields.
33. Sense of weather changes.
34. Sense of emotional place, of community, belonging, support, trust and thankfulness.
35. Sense of self, including friendship, companionship and power.
36. Domineering and territorial sense.
37. Colonizing sense, including receptive awareness of one's fellow creatures, sometimes to the degree of being absorbed into a superorganism.
38. Horticultural sense and the ability to cultivate crops, as is done by ants who grow fungus, by fungus who farm algae, or birds that leave food to attract their prey.
39. Language and articulation sense, used to express feelings and convey information in every medium from the bees' dance to human literature.
40. Sense of humility, appreciation, ethics.
41. Senses of form and design.
42. Reasoning, including memory and the capacity for logic and science.
43. Sense of mind and consciousness.
44. Intuition or subconscious deduction.
45. Aesthetic sense, including creativity and appreciation of beauty, music, literature, form, design and drama.
46. Psychic capacity such as foreknowledge, clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychokinesis, astral projection and possibly certain animal instincts and plant sensitivities.
47. Sense of biological and astral time, awareness of past, present and future events.
48. The capacity to hypnotize other creatures.
49. Relaxation and sleep, including dreaming, meditation, brain wave awareness.
50. Sense of pupation, including cocoon building and metamorphosis.
51. Sense of excessive stress and capitulation.
52. Sense of survival by joining a more established organism.
53. Spiritual sense, including conscience, capacity for sublime love, ecstasy, a sense of sin, profound sorrow and sacrifice.

(*An extension of Guy Murchie's 31 sense list presented in his excellent book THE SEVEN MYSTERIES OF LIFE)

Connector 9. S-E-V-M-R-A-T-C : Reinforcing Your Natural Senses.

SEVMRATC (pronounced Sev-mer-rat-see) is to Sense-Enjoy-Validate-Match-Resonate-Appreciate-Trust and Celebrate your environment and its expression in yourself.

T.H. Huxley suggested that you "sit down before fact like a little child, and be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly to wherever and whatever abyss Nature leads, or you shall learn nothing." SEVMRATC makes space for you to do this. It asks your best qualities to intensify your natural senses and inject them into your awareness. (Much of SEVMRATC is adopted from workshops by Dr. Clifford Knapp.)

To S-E-V-M-R-A-T-C:

Select an attractive natural area(s) and then, as interest permits, visit the part of it whose mood is most attractive to you with respect to one of the following:

color	space	direction
motion	temperature	community
touch	form	beauty
sound	smell	trust
nurturing	place	taste

and others. *For our example we will use color.*

SEVMRATC:

Note: *SEVMRATC appears frequently throughout this Guidebook. Unless you write small, space in this Guide may not suffice. However, space is provided between the paragraphs, in margins and at chapter ends for a summary of your SEVMRATC reactions. If necessary, write your original SEVMRATC reactions in an additional notebook or journal.*

Go to a central point of this area. Select a place and direction which keeps the built environs, artifacts and other people out of your view.

Connector 10. You Are Color:

Focus your attention on this natural environment's *color* mood or some other mood that strikes you. Remember, you sense this *color* because for survival it calls and connects to the part of your Nature which is this *color* in you. Note: There are many colors like ultra-violet or infra-red that we cannot see. Biologically, we evolved to survive without seeing them. Similarly, for survival cats see only blue and yellow. Many animals are color blind.

Connector 11. Sense:

Check out different parts of your surroundings and move to the point that *colorwise* seems most attractive.

Connector 12. Enjoy:

Spend one minute enjoying your chosen place's or thing's *color*. For example: *Enjoy* the *color* of an orange leaf. Recognize that you deserve to enjoy every aspect of life, including *color*.

Complete the following sentence: I enjoy this place's (leaf's) *color* because it makes me feel_____.

Connector 13. Validate:

Acknowledge to yourself that you are someone who finds this particular place's *color* attractive and enjoys it. In your separate SEVMRATC notebook write a short statement to this effect.

Connector 14. Match:

Match this *color* with the same *color* that you might see or feel within you, your *color* memories, associations and mood. Write down the parts of your personality that are this *color*.

Assume a physical posture or motion that matches this *colorful* entity's shape and imitate this entity's motions. For example: to match the radiating shape of an *orange* leaf, hang with your body and arms spread like the leaf and wave as it does in the wind. Learn from how this activity feels. Write down the feelings.

Connector 15. Resonate:

The *color* of this place has a certain quality which gives you a special resonant feeling. Hum or sing a musical note or notes that resonantly express your feeling while experiencing this *color*. (Also *Resonate* through songs, visual arts, poetry and dance.)

Connector 16. Appreciate And Honor:

In writing thank this *color* mood which has attracted you for having given your life so much *color* and feeling. *Honor* this entity with some physical act, gift or spoken words. Honor it for contributing its *color* sensations to the global life community and you.

Connector 17. Trust:

Trust the rationality and feelings you obtain from this SEVMRATC experience. Trust the love of Nature you may discover. If your rational mind resists trusting your sensations and feelings, it is rational to demand that it trust them because your sensations and feelings are facts. SEVMRATC helps Nature express itself. Trust SEVMRATC. Use it often to connect with any natural area or sense. Write a short statement explaining why you trust and want to continue to use SEVMRATC.

Connector 18. Celebrate:

In your SEVMRATC notebook write a Haiku verse or short poem which expresses your thoughts and feelings about connecting with *color*. (A Haiku is three line prose whose first line contains 5 syllables, second line contains 7 syllables and third closing line contains 5 syllables.) For example, for connecting with orange autumn leaves you might write:

Orange sunrise leaves,
Awaken deep within me,
The dawn of being.

Upon completing the Haiku, assume a posture or motion which you feel states your good feelings with regard to this SEVMRATC event. Hold your position or motions for at least one minute. If necessary, defend yourself from criticism within or around you. Modern thinking may critically label you as "unscientific" or "spiritual." Declare your independence. Protect your pursuit of happiness, your good feeling connections with Nature, if you want them to survive. As Rollo May says, "If you do not listen to your own being you will have betrayed yourself."

Share your Haikus. They enable language to connect people with Nature. Use them as an opening or closing to letters. Decorate and frame them.

Now read through your SEVMRATC margin or notebook entries and summarize your SEVMRATC experiences and feelings with a few sentences, your Haiku, a

poem, drawing or other statement(s). Enter your summary in the space provided below as well as the margins.

SEVMRATC Summary Space:

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Return to the central area and repeat SEVMRATC with other sensations listed above (temperature, form, smell, etc.). Anytime you are enjoying a natural phenomenon make space in your life to SEVMRATC the event and its feelings. With practice, you will develop your own special means to achieve SEVMRATC.

Connector 19. Sensation Information: Further explore your sense of touch and form.

1. Pick up six similarly sized sticks (or rocks) and place them before you.

2. Shut your eyes, and then pick up one stick.

3. With your eyes remaining closed, mark the selected stick with your pencil, then feel the stick all over until you familiarize yourself with its shape, texture and other idiosyncrasies.

4. With your eyes still shut, return the stick to the pile. Mix up the pile of sticks, and then pick up the sticks one at a time and feel them until you believe you have found the stick you selected and marked.

5. Now open your eyes and note if you have selected the stick you marked.

6. In the space below thank the sticks for helping validate your senses of touch and form.

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Connector 20. Dreams: "Dreams are the touchstones of our character," wrote Henry David Thoreau. Dreams are also a natural connector by which Nature makes itself known to modern thinking.

Wild Nature within our civilized bodies is like an untamed animal caged at the zoo. However, when we sleep we lose contact those societal limits that form the cage. This releases the natural animal caged within us and fills our dreams with our suppressed feelings and sensations.

To connect your modern thinking with Nature through dreams:

1. Remember your dreams by writing them down as soon as possible.

2. Identify the entities and stories in the dream.

3. Write down what and how you feel about each item in #2.

4. Make sense of the feeling story of the dream in #3 by discovering what affinity senses are seeking fulfillment. (To deal with uncomfortable feelings in dreams see Connector #48.)

5. In a good, balanced way make strong efforts to fulfill your affinities by fulfilling your dreams' positive feelings in your daily life.

Many good books and people are available to help you make your dreams into useful connectors.

Connector 21. Solos:

Solos, that is being alone in Nature, can last from a few minutes to a few days and may be done in any safe natural area where your presence is not destructive to the land. Solos provide a space for sensing silence and Nature's symphony both about and within you. The fewer technologies that you bring on solos, the greater the connectiveness that occurs. Listen to John Muir who suggested:

> *"Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."*

Connector 22. Relaxing helps us to more intensely sense the moods of Nature. It reduces the language signals and social tensions that preoccupy our modern lives.

One effective way to relax is to take a slow deep breath and imagine it spreading Nature's peaceful relaxing glow throughout your body into your toes and fingers. Then, when you exhale imagine the air rejuvenating you by releasing the tensions that collect in your body. While exhaling don't fight gravity. Just completely relax and let gravity take over, pulling you down, slowing you down, collapsing you.

Connector 23. Sleeping Outside:

Whenever weather and insects permit, sleep on the ground under the stars and clouds. The great out-of-doors makes a glorious bedroom whose ancient vibrancy, songs and perfumes touch you, asleep or awake.

Connector 24. Totems:

When a natural entity touches you deeply, take a small sample of it with you and carry it always to have its power on hand. Only a few special to tems should be collected, otherwise they tend to negate each other as well as denude the area.

For additional sensitizing activities read CREATING HUMANE CLIMATES OUTDOORS by Clifford E. Knapp, available from ERIC/CRESS, P.O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325 ($6.50).

Connector 25. Consolidation:

"I was captivated by the energetic new connections I felt between Nature within and without. More and more of my natural senses were awakened by SEVMRATC."

--Unity Church workshop participant

Before continuing on to the next section, write here what you feel to be the three most important points of this section.

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Supplemental Reading: New Vistas Dawn in HOW NATURE WORKS.

NOTES

NOTES

THINKING

"Never does Nature say one thing and wisdom another."

--Jovenel

This chapter connects with Nature's intelligence. Nature demonstrates its intelligence by creating balanced perfection as, without producing garbage or pollutants, it peacefully achieves the greatest good for the greatest number.

Connector 26. The Life Solution: Earth is the only planet containing water. Sip water's sweetness:

> Find a spring that is pure and quench your thirst by drinking directly from it, then SEVMRATC. Or go out in the rain or during a snowstorm. Drink the rain or snow, then SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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During some portion of its existence, Earth's water contains natural excrements (including your own), decay, germs and chemicals. Sensibly, Nature purifies water and returns it to its source for reuse again and again.

As a part of the global life community, pure, crystal clear, continually thirst quenching water is part of your natural intelligence.

Connector 27. Sensing Substance Sharing:

> Safely build a small fire from leaves, twigs, bark and other natural burnables, and SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Astutely, Nature transforms itself through fire. Fire changes burnables into minerals, carbon dioxide and water vapor upon which other members of the natural world feed. Plants "eat" soil fertilized and remineralized by fire. They breathe carbon dioxide produced by fire. Clouds are produced by fire's water vapor which plants then "drink."

A slow form of fire, called *respiration* (burning calories), produces your body heat (your personal temperature) and your life energy. Fire is in you.

Feeling alive, energetic and warm is fire's intelligent gift to you from Nature.

Connector 28. Living in the Light:

Sit in a cold dark cave, closet or cellar for five minutes. Then, go outside, sit in the light of the Sun, and SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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Sunlight's brilliance warms and energizes you and Earth. Plants sensibly use it to make the world's food. It is the foundation of your sense of sight and recognition of color. Sunlight is a bright, fulfilling, eye-opening part of your natural heritage.

Connector 29. Sustained In Air:

Hold your breath until you can't stand it any longer, breathe again, and SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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Intelligently, air is produced by the global life community to permit organisms to live on land. Air circulates food and Nature's many secretions. When you inhale, air quenches your suffocation feelings. Air's cleverly designed life-giving, refreshing particles are part of your heritage.

Connector 30. The Wild Food Connection:

Find a safe wild food (not farm raised) like wild strawberries or dulse or a raw food like a carrot or parsley. Eat it, and SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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Intelligently, from Nature's profound mixing of sun, water, soil and air, grow plants which when eaten, allow minerals and energy to flow throughout the global life community. Sharing tasty, hunger satisfying, life-giving food is an ingenious natural way to energize a community.

Connector 31. Making Sense Through Senses:

Find an attractive natural area. Locate moods that most strongly call to you and for each of them SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Your naked eye can't see Nature's most ancient, profuse and profound community here, yet it exists right before your eyes. Touch, smell and listen to this area in order to sense the soil and other natural entities around you, then touch your scalp, skin and tongue as well.

Put your ear to the ground and see if you can be sensitive enough to hear the soil's microbial life forms judiciously relating to each other. Soil consists of interacting microorganisms and mineral particles. Make that idea so vibrant that you can hear microbial life as you listen to the soil's richness.

Taste, eat and ingest bacteria: savor and swallow yogurt, cheese or sour cream, much of which is bacteria.

I Sensed: .....

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Everything natural, including ourselves, evolved from, is covered with and utilizes the wise survival senses and processes of minerals, viruses and microorganisms. When you touch or eat most anything, you make physical contact with your life's ancient, intelligent parents.

You see, you are older than you might realize. Although you usually mark your birthday based on the day your human mother gave birth to you, biologically your life is part of the ancient global life community. Your life, along with its life was born some four billion years ago.

Aeons ago, minerals and microorganisms intelligently organized our planet's environment into life as we know it. In fact, viruses are smart enough to exist sometimes as mineral crystals and other times as living creatures. Such adaptation is highly intelligent.

On Earth, elements, minerals and simple bacteria invented all of life's essential chemical systems, genetic materials and sensitivities, as well as fermentation, reproduction, photosynthesis, oxygen breathing, and the removal of nitrogen gas from the air. In fact, on the Planet and in people, under the microscope scientists have watched unicellular

organisms meet and exchange information. Today, minute microorganisms and mineral particles brilliantly continue to maintain each of these immensely complex processes.

The knowledgeable relationships between molecules, minerals, microorganisms and their environments also gave rise to the more complex organs and organ systems of more recent forms of life. For example, the descendents of bacteria that swam in primeval seas, breathing oxygen three billion years ago, today exist as colonies of mitochondria in all plant and animal cells including your own. Without these colonies, neither plants nor animals could utilize oxygen and live. We breathe to make these bacterial colonies within us "happy." They in turn wisely make available to us the oxygen we bring them.

Our bodies consist of ten quadrillion animal cells and another one hundred quadrillion bacterial cells. Fully one-half our body weight is bacteria involved in their sensible processes. Furthermore, when we die, microorganisms integrate us back into Nature. In short, each of us are astute recombinations, expansions, and expressions of profound microbial-mineral relationships. Our genetic materials (DNA) were established by and are continuations of ancient microorganism relationships and processes.

Scientists today believe that ancient microorganisms even helped create rocks and minerals. The whole immensely complex Natural world, including our biological selves, is ingeniously being run by little bugs and tiny yogurt makers.

The Connecting Flow Of Life: Every year the knowledgeable nutritional processes of microbial life around, on and in you replace 98% of your body with new materials from Nature. Within every few years your body's materials are totally replaced. With infinite wisdom and care your life is constantly sustained because Nature flows through you. You become it, while it becomes you.

Connector 32. Soil: Soil is intelligence in action. A teaspoon of living earth contains a learned community of five million bacteria, twenty million fungi, one million protozoa and two hundred thousand algae. There are about 9,500 kinds of soil in the United States and, along with Earth's other creatures, from thus we arise and to thus we return. In fact, the word *human* comes from the word *humus*. Humus is a rich microbial soil. *Human* means *sprung from the soil.*

> Lie on your back on the soil with your head touching the ground. While in this position think of yourself as a Siamese twin of Planet Earth.

The microbial soil community you lie on maintains you and your environment, but you and the environment are not equally endowed. The soil community did not give you the power to mix sunlight, air and water to make food. The soil community gave that gift to plants. What it thoughtfully gave you was Earth's circulatory system and metabolism. As if you were a baby in its mother's womb, Nature makes your food, oxygen and pure water, circulates them to you, and then recycles them for your use again and again. Your relationship to Nature is like your leg's vital connection to your body.

> In your fixed position lying on your back, you can't turn your head, you can't see Earth, you only know it by touching, sensing and feeling it. But Earth needs your energies to keep it turning in the sun. Earth's rotation and its pulsing temperature differences between night and day keep the wind blowing and life flowing.
>
> As you lie on the ground, act intelligently. Energize Earth. Keep the world going round by twisting your body and moving your arms and legs. Produce actions that

help turn Earth towards the morning sun. Help Earth continue to make pure air, food, water and joy.

Out of the corner of your eyes look around you. Notice that every other plant, animal and mineral is, like yourself, also a Siamese twin with Earth. Each in its own way makes Earth turn. Through the soil you are all connected so that, in fact, global life is astutely made up of "all for each and each for all" (Emerson). SEVMRATC your feelings about this.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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The global life community brilliantly organizes itself under the sun in this attached, Siamese twin, sharing, cooperative way. This is Nature's bright logic for connecting and supporting all of life. It's an anti-entropic, life-giving logic known as bio-logic or eco-logic. And in people where it is also a felt logic of senses and emotions, it is a psycho-logic.

Connector 33. Return To Your Source: Enable yourself to know Nature as Nature knows itself.

In a place free from poisonous plants, ticks or other dangers, get down on all fours. Imagine that you are a microbial cell crawling around in this planet's gigantic global life community. You are, after all *in* its atmosphere, therefore you are functioning as a bacterium or cell *in* the Earth organism.

Close your eyes. For five minutes slowly crawl three steps and then, holding your head very still, open your eyes for three seconds. Close them again and repeat this crawling around, eye-opening procedure.

Then, with your eyes shut, for five minutes or longer, feel with your hands, bare feet, toes, body and head. Sniff out this giant. Listen, taste, sense it well. Roll on it, rub parts of it against the inside of your arms, feel it with your toes and nose, listen to it with your fingers, suck it into your nostrils, crawl on it, smell the scene. Then, open your eyelids, drink Nature in with your eyes, seek the new and different, be Nature's friend, climb its trees, squint at it out of focus, seek different angles, know the grass as a forest. Recognize that you are part of all of this intelligent relating and vice versa.

Enjoy your sensations of this omniscient giant called Nature. SEVMRATC them.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 34. Ancient Feelings:

Bring to mind your feelings of hunger, thirst, temperature, excretion, companionship, gravity, community, sex, mobility, suffocation, trust, intelligence and love. All of these are your global sized Earth body intelligently nurturing you. SEVMRATC if you feel so moved. Write here what you sense and how this Connector makes you feel.

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Connector 35. Feeling Sensibility: Using natural senses, Nature invented making sense.

Acknowledge in writing that your ability to feel is part of Nature's intelligence. In writing and discussion thank this area for that contribution.

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Connector 36. Sensing Natural Intelligence:

1. With respect, ask permission of a safe bush or tree to cut three small twigs with leaves from it.

2. Place one twig in each of your shoes and with your non-writing hand, hold the other twig in front of your face so that you breathe and look through it.

3. Sit or lie down in the fetal position (curled up like a ball, knees tucked into your chest) and shut your eyes.

4. Think of yourself as being our intelligent Planet and its wise global plant, animal and mineral community.

5. SEVMRATC each of your personal natural wisdoms such as your heartbeat, breathing, inner warmth, darkness, structural skeletal support, eye motions, consciousness, sensations and desires for air, water, relationships, sunshine, etc.

6. With your eyes closed, imagine the natural world around you to also be dark, to be wisely operating and feeling just like you do with your eyes closed. Then imagine that when you open your eyes, you make the world become what you see around you. Then open your eyes.

7. Imagine now that when you next shut your eyes, the real world again becomes your sightless, sensations and feeling world, then shut your eyes. Repeat #6 and #7 several times, then write down what thoughts and feelings about Nature's intelligence this Connector triggers within you.

Connector 37. Diversified Intelligence: Each of Earth's creatures contains Nature's microbial intelligence. Each creature expresses this wisdom in its own unique ways; this poem helps you sense their sensibility.

SENSIBLE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

To know how to grow from an ovum to child,
To fly South when its cool, and North when its mild,
To grow seeds that are borne in the food they will need,
To heal wounds in all flesh, no matter its creed.

The insect to larva and moth it will grow,
Runs fleet the antelope, yet the snail survives slow,
The spruce tree antifreeze makes in its saps,
But birch drops its leaves, then takes long winter naps

Cloud forests transpire and make their own rain,
While prairies delight on their rainshadow plain,
The Kite shapes its bill so it fits in the snail,
And Eagles let Ospreys catch them their lunch pail.

And while some relish polar caps, other savannahs,
The insect world's smarts make us all go bananas,
Six thousand mile roots each rye grass does grow,
Exceedingly well the good Earth each must know.

And when chewed upon, plants make themselves taste quite bitter,
While birds change their songs, dodging death with a twitter,
Each one knows its niche, be they short, fat or tall,
And wasteland to us, is wildlife's shopping mall.

Wildlife doesn't read maps, this fact is well known,
Yet pets return thousands of miles to their home,
And some birds fly pole to pole twice yearly,
Mapping rays, stars, geography and magnetic lines clearly.

While the trees tell each other a blight's on its way,
We live our work ethic, but Nature does play,
At this game we call life, and it has a great time,
While its senses prevent ecological crime.

All this and lots more, Nature's boggling facts,
Incomprehensibly just and intelligent acts,
Confound those who only see cause and effect,
While forgetting how orchestras play so perfect.

SEVMRATC the sense the poem gives you.

SEVMRATC Summary:. . . . . .

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Connector 38. Variations On Intelligence:

Use the following comparisons to recognize the values and interpretations we place on Nature's intelligence.

Modern Thinking	Natural Intelligence
Works with abstract symbols (words) and images	Works mostly with tensions, sensations and feelings
Strengthened through enforced education and laws	*Usually ignored and unexercised*
Considered important	Often considered disruptive or subjective
Culturally logical and rational	*Wild and freely balanced*
Makes up 15% of our mentality	Makes up 85% of our mentality
Evolved recently	*Evolved as ancient life's wisdom*
Connected to Culture	Connected to Nature
Taught to conquer Nature	*Inherently supports the global life community*
Mainly utilizes the intellect's symbol and image data	Integrates sensations from the total body and environment
Dualistically divides up life's wholeness	*Connects with the ongoing whole*
Recognizes time as money and power	Recognizes time as lingering relationships, connections and feelings
Recognizes entities as objects	*Recognizes entities as partnerships*
Produces pollution, toxins, violence and stress	Peacefully creates no garbage
Learns quickly and superficially from words	*Learns slowly and deeply from the effects of relationships*

Knows Earth's aliveness from photographs taken from space	Knows Earth's aliveness by feeling it.
Knows land as a commodity to sell	*Knows land as a community to celebrate*

Identify the strongest feelingful thought that you sense from reading the above and SEVMRATC it.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 39. Respecting Nature:

To recognize and appreciate the intelligence of the natural world, your "other body," write it a note thanking it for its wisdom, and honoring it for making your life possible.

Connector 40. Consolidation:

"I recognized how inseparable I was from microorganisms and the amazing, untapped natural intelligence that lies within and about me."

--North American Association for Environmental Education workshop participant

Before continuing on to the next section, write down what you feel to be the three most important points of this section.

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Supplemental Reading: New Vistas Dawn, Learning from Nature, and The Science of Gaia in HOW NATURE WORKS.

NOTES

EMBRACING

"Nature is the unseen intelligence that loved us into being."
--Elbert Hubbard

For hundreds of years people have observed that everything in Nature is attached to something else. This chapter connects you to Nature's bonding energies.

Meet The Area: Locate the overall and local moods *that most strongly call to you* from the natural area you have chosen to experience. For each mood Sense-Enjoy-Validate-Match-Resonate-Appreciate-Trust-Celebrate (SEVMRATC).

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 41. Instinct Affinities:

Look at any object around you and say what you see.

We are to air as a fish is to water. Did you mention that you saw the air between yourself and the object you observed? Probably not, because as you get to know things by only using your sense of sight, you disconnect from that which you can't see.

Attempt to "see" the air with Nature's multitude of senses rather than using only your sense of sight. Sit here quietly and try to become conscious of the air:

Feel and hear a breeze.

Recognize the temperature difference between the ground and the air.

Smell the air.

Sip air through your lips, feel it enter your body. Gargle air, then speak with it.

Blow your breath into the air or bubble it through water.

After closing your eyes, open them and sense how you feel the air with your eyes.

Wave your hand through the air to feel it.

Watch light shimmering because of the air's movement.

Hear sounds and know that air carried them to you.

Watch the air move soil, grasses, leaves and clouds and make waves on water. Watch for dust devils.

Notice the sky's different color on the horizon than directly above you.

Inhale deeply and sense your breath passing down through your body and into your legs, toes, arms and fingers. Imagine air revitalizing every part of your body.

As you inhale, you are being breathed by the natural world. Within you it collects air particles vital for its existence.

Exhale, then hold your breath for as long as you can. Notice how you feel a tension building in yourself. This tension insists that you ***survive****. It forces you to reconnect with the natural world by breathing its air again.*

Feel the suffocation-tension continuing to build in you. Release that tension by inhaling. Enjoy the glowing, relaxing comfort you feel as you commence breathing again. SEVMRATC that sensation.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Nature desires your existence. If you refused to breathe you would become unconscious, at which time Nature would make you breathe, and thus rejoin you to the global life community.

Connect your vocabulary to air: the words *psyche* and *spirit* are derivations of the word air. ***Respiration*** can mean ***re-spiriting***. Recognize the air as a spirit or spiritual leader and SEVMRATC it as such.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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The natural world connects all it entities through vibrating *tension-building* and *tension-release* (tension-relaxation). This includes such instinctive comforting and discomforting feelings as suffocation, hunger, thirst, sleep, excretion, etc. This tension-relaxation cycle is part of every entity in some form. It is found in sub-atomic particles, weather systems, living beings and even Earth's orbit around the Sun.

Connect with tension-relaxation. Examine ten natural entities that surround you in this area. Locate or conceive the vibrating tensions and relaxations that exist within and around them. Write them in your notebook and SEVMRATC. For example: a plant fluctuates between windy and calm, hot and cold, wet and dry, night and day. Animals behave in high tension "aggressive" but harmless ways to communicate their life desires and in doing so attain relaxation.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Pay attention to your feelings and sensations if you want to connect with Nature. Your feelings are Nature's tension-relaxation in action. It is worthwhile writing down when and where you personally feel tension and relaxation for as Thoreau noted, "The laws of the universe are not indifferent, but are forever on the side of the most sensitive."

Connector 42. Survival: An essence of Nature is ***survival***, the "desire" *to be*. In some form the desire to be exists in all entities (matter).

Scientists suggest that billions of years ago, matter and anti-matter desired or fought for existence. Matter's desire *to be* won that fight and created all *beings*. All matter, such as sub-atomic particles, atoms, molecules, substances and life as we know it, including yourself, are expressions of this desire. All desire *to be*. Your natural survival feelings, such as suffocation, hunger, nurturing and thirst, express your *self*, your desire *to be*. SEVMRATC your desire to be.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 43. Survival Affinities:

Attempt to collect different natural objects in this area and *without actually moving* them note that attachments bond each entity to being where and what it is. Can you find any entities not subject to some attracting force? (Note that air remains on Planet Earth because it is attached here by gravity.) In writing validate and trust your findings.

Any specific kind of attraction is called an *affinity*. The 53 affinities of Nature are listed in Connector 8. Note how many of your affinities are expressed in you as *sensations* and *feelings*. SEVMRATC the affinity you sense in this area and within yourself.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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Write a short statement about your desire *to be* in light of the statement: *"When your feeling for being (survival) motivates you to act, you have touched its essence."*

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"Matter is not a thing at all, it is an event," observed Quantum Physicist David Bohm. Scientists tell us that *affinities* are universal attractions which make being, i.e. matter possible. The formation of attraction relationships helps any entity, including yourself, to be in a more full, stable, and secure way. The greater the number of balanced supportive relationships an entity has, the more stable is its *being*.

Connector 44. Where's Home?:

Sit or lie in your area for a moment. Relax and let it and your imagination take you to the most attractive time and place in your life, the place where you felt most supported and secure with people and your surroundings. Write down each of the feelings and sensations you remember from this place.

Recognize that this remembered place is attractive to you because many of your life's desires (affinities) were consummated at this time and place. Think of this fulfilling time and place as your psychological home and return there often. In writing, SEVMRATC this place and your feelings about it.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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Connector 45. Affinity Desires: Each and every entity from sub-atomic particles to weather systems, "desires" to relate to other entities because they seek stability.

Once entities form relationships, these new relationships further "desire" more stabilizing relationships. This truism exists on every level of being. For example: sodium atoms have an *affinity* for chlorine atoms and when they bond, their vibrating tension-relaxation dance forms sodium chloride (salt) which in turn has *affinities* for other entities.

On some level, affinities are like universal bonding attractions, romances, loves or marriages of the entities involved. This has led many persons to note that: "Love is the only reality of the world because it is all."

Reactions: .....

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Connector 46. Recognizing Affinities:

Would you go to a demolition derby if they were demolishing animals?

Have you ever felt baby animals were cute or adorable?

Would you discard your pet if it broke its leg like you would discard your toaster if it broke?

Would you idly stand by and watch a living being starve if you had food?

Do you feel sad when you see road kills?

Do these questions arouse affinity feelings in you that you have been told to ignore? These affinity feelings are Nature in action. SEVMRATC them.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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In writing, explain how you believe these feelings have survival value and join you to the global life community.

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Write your thoughts and feelings about the following statements:

"To him who in the love of Nature holds communion with her visible forms, she speaks a various language."

--William Collen Bryant

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"The man who has become a thinking being feels a compulsion to give to every will-to-live the same reverence for life that he gives his own."

--Albert Schweitzer

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"By beauty, the sensuous man is brought back to the world of sense."
--Fredrich Von Schiller

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"The heart has its reasons which reason does not know."
--Pascal

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Connector 47. Affinities and Rationality: Everything we speak or write is an attempt to express in words the *feelings* that precede it. Feelings from your natural intelligence motivate most of your statements and conscious thoughts. These feelings are also survival expressions of the natural world.

Attempt to discover the often subtle, subliminal feelings that precede your thoughts.

1. Write down what you are thinking or would like to say right now, or in writing react to the statement: "Your behavior today was absurd."

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2. Ask yourself what feelings lie behind what you have written. Why did you write what you did?

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3. Validate these feelings by noting their existence and that they have survival value with respect to making room for your life. Write how each feeling steers you to satisfy your natural affinities.

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4. Repeat this procedure when you hear others speak. Try to relate to their feelings as well as their statements. Sometimes called "listening with the third ear," this is a good way to deepen relationships.

5. Thank your natural intelligence for its feelingful energies on your behalf. Repeat this whole procedure whenever you have time.

Connector 48. Your Negative Feelings: Because Nature consists of affinities between all entities, there are no negatives in the natural world. Negatives are the frustrated feelings generated when the fulfillment of affinities is thwarted.

1. In writing, list five or more negative or uncomfortable reactions you have to your area and/or to Nature in general. (Example: *I am irritated by nasty weather because it is cold and wet.*)

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2. Locate and list your affinities that are thwarted by each entity. (Example: *I like to feel warm and dry, i.e. I have affinities for certain temperature ranges and dryness which are not being fulfilled.*)

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3. Write down why each of the discomforting, affinity-thwarting entities you found annoy you. (Example: *The rain makes me uncomfortable because it frustrates my affinity for being warm and dry.* However, don't demean the rain by calling it nasty; like everything else including yourself, it is an affinity satisfaction and plays a vital role in the global life community, that's why it exists.)

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4. Write your reaction to Luther Burbank's claim that "natural laws affirm instead of prohibit," and Sigmund Freud's observation that "civilization is built upon the suppression of instinct" (i.e. natural affinities).

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5. In writing and/or discussion, practice recognizing your negative feelings about Nature as your affinities being thwarted in order that other entities might survive. In time you will learn Nature's time and patience.

Note that negative signals like personal depression, fear, anxiety or anger are actually signals from your inner Nature. It feels abandoned, its life affinities denied. (For further information about this phenomenon read: Nature Abandoned in HOW NATURE WORKS.)

Connector 49. Knowing Life: Your personal life and life on Earth are a seamless continuum, a slow, ever-growing and evolving multibillion year old *vibrating affinity* dance between all entities within and around you.

Say and write: "I am affinities. I am attraction relationships. I am naturally intelligent, I am a desire to be." If this feels uncomfortable, attempt to sense

which of your affinities it is thwarting. Is it your desires for acceptance and support from others? Will you let approval from others control you? Is the thwarting real or imagined?

Reactions:. . . . . .

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Connector 50. Labeling Accurately: Each word we use is a key to reality; the wrong word opens the wrong door. As Confucius said, "The beginning of wisdom is calling things by their right name."

Because each natural entity you identify is actually a *being* relationship, to be accurate call each entity a *being*. Thus call rocks "*rock beings*," trees "*tree beings*," frogs "*frog beings*," etc. Do this until it feels comfortable and SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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Connector 51: Respecting Life:

In writing, thank and honor the Natural world for being, as well as for dancing and sharing its vibrant affinity dance.

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Connector 52: Consolidation:

"I came to know myself as vibrant affinities, as an expression of the original desire to be which is found in all natural things. I realized that the more supportive relationships I have, the more stable I become and that this includes my relationship with myself."

--Monteverde, Costa Rica Workshop Participant

Before continuing on to the next section, write what you feel to be the three most important points of this section.

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Supplemental Reading: The Affinity Bond in HOW NATURE WORKS.

NOTES

JOINING

"The original sin is to limit the desire to be. Don't."

--Unknown

Being **consists of active tension-relaxation affinity relationships. This chapter enables you to connect with Nature by recognizing natural entities as attraction relationships in which you participate.**

> ***Meet The Area:*** Locate the overall and local moods of a new natural area *that most strongly call to you* and for each of them Sense-Enjoy-Validate-Match-Resonate-Appreciate-Trust and Celebrate (SEVMRATC).

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 53. Labeling Actions: Your natural sensations are Nature reaching out to itself in you.

> Label your many relationships with this area as verbs. Instead of saying: "I like this leaf's color," write or say: "I am coloring with this leaf;" "I am vibrating with this tree;" "I am touched by this branch;" "I am singing with this bird;" "I am being with the land;" "I am Iing," etc. Write how this makes you feel and SEVMRATC the feeling.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 54. Nouns Are Acts:

> Describe your favorite object in this area but use no nouns in your primary

description. For example, instead of saying: "This is a tree," say: "This is affinity partnerships between water, air, chlorophyll, sunlight, soil and mineral elements."

Repeat the sentence you have written and change another noun in it into a verb so that "water" might now become "tension-relaxation romancing between hydrogen and oxygen atoms." Continue making your sentences' nouns into verbs until most of your description becomes active.

Read your final sentence *as a description of yourself.* Note how much it fits you and how much you have in common with any natural entity.

Connector 55. Objects Are Verbs:

Refer to the natural entities in this area as verbs by adding the suffix "ing" to them so, for example, a tree becomes "treeing"; water becomes "watering"; birds become "birding"; etc. Do this until it feels comfortable, then SEVMRATC. Now describe yourself as an *ing.* You are part of the natural world. A portion of each of these entities is *inging* in you.

Connector 56. Becoming The Acts Around You:

In your area locate a plant, an animal and a rock that attract you. In turn, for each of these entities:

1. Become friends with that entity.

2. Imagine yourself becoming smaller and smaller until you become smaller than an atom.

3. Enter into the entity and travel to its center.

4. Slowly allow yourself to grow larger and flow into every part of the entity until you become it and all its affinities.

5. Being this entity:

a. As this entity, write down what you think and feel, what's enjoyable about being you, what attracts you, your hopes, opinions, tensions. SEVMRATC how you feel.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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b. As this entity, on paper draw a design of your being. Color it by staining it with mixtures of natural things: leaves, water, berries, minerals, dirt, saliva, dust, mucus, sap, bark, blood, mud, etc. Ask the picture you have drawn if there is something it wants to teach you. Write down its response to your question and SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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c. As this entity, you grew and grow enjoying your relationships and being. Recognize your integrity, your desire to maintain yourself in your present state, and your resistance to being changed.

d. As this natural entity:
Do you live in the past, present, or future?
Do you experience the past or future at all?
Is your life reasonably paced or stressfully hurried?
Are you governed by clocks and schedules or by natural attractions and your desire to be?

6. After "being" a plant, animal and rock, write down the affinities and the differences, if any, that existed between the three roles. Can an entity be "content" being itself?

Connector 57. Uniqueness: Any entity is Nature being that entity, yet each entity has its own "unique*ness*" too.

List eight natural entities in this area and try to sense their unique essence. Then label it. For example: An owl becomes "owlness," grass becomes "grassness," an oak becomes "oakness," etc. Sense each entity's "essence*ness*," then SEVMRATC it.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 58. Nature's Activeness:

Write three sentences about you being in this area using "ness" and "ing." For example: a tree would be: *"This is a treeing and I ing enjoy its treeness."*

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If you are with others, share your reactions to this exercise amongst yourselves. Then thank the entities and your companions.

Connector 59. Connecting With Uniqueness: Because every entity continually relates to its ever changing environment, at any given moment no two entities are exactly alike.

> Observe this area and note the impossibility of finding two entities that are exactly the same. If for no other reason, they are not exactly alike because they don't occupy the same space.

Individual people, leaves, rocks, molecules, mountains and clouds are always different and changing. This produces Nature's diversity everywhere.

Nature's fluctuating diversity may be its only constant. This is true of yourself and people on a natural level, but not necessarily on an abstract academic or intellectual level. For example: Many of our cultural truths are static: 1 + 1 always equals 2.

Connector 60. Connecting With Nature's Flow: This metaphoric activity lets you (*you-ing*) be guided by the *being* of other natural entities.

> Weave a 200 foot string on the ground through the safe parts (no glass, ticks, crevices, etc.) of a wooded area and tie its end to a stable object.
>
> Go back to the string's beginning, blindfold yourself and slowly, cautiously, feelingfully, crawl along holding and following the string. Guide yourself by touching it as well as by carefully sensing the obstacles you encounter.
>
> Think of the string as your desire to be and the entities you encounter as intelligent treeings, bushness, rock beings, etc. They, in concert, maintain life's balance for themselves and you as they guide you along your string. While you are fully involved in doing this, notice whether you are living in the past, present, or future.

This activity exemplifies your sentient natural intelligence moving your life within the balancing guidelines of the global life community so that both can survive and grow.

> Retrieve the string and go back over the course noting what, if any, changes were made in it by your having been there. Carefully attempt to do the course again without the string. This is very difficult to do!
>
> Check the course weeks later to see if natural affinities are returning it to their original state of being.

Reality Check: As civilized people we mostly know our environment and ourselves through *language* whose nouns tell us that the global life community consists of interrelating materials, such as rocks, blood, chemicals, trees, etc. The natural world, however, is a *non-language* experience which knows itself through slowly balanced, ever growing affinity relationships, many of which we experience as feelings and sensations. What then is reality, the material or sentient world?

Connector 61. Nature's Time:

> To beneficially connect with Nature, get into the active NOW, the *present* of your

life. That's where your feelings and Nature's supportive affinities always exist. The present is where you can do something about fulfilling your frustrated affinities. (To learn more about this skill read The Golden Glow in HOW NATURE WORKS.)

Connector 62. Subjective Writing:

Describe an environment or entity that appeals to you, but don't describe its features qualitatively or quantitatively. Instead describe it by writing down how you sense it, how it makes you feel, your thoughts of it, and your memories, associations and opinions about it. Share your essay with others. This is often a moving way to write or connect with Nature within and without.

Connector 63. Respecting Life:

Thank and honor this entity or area for its beings, and for sharing their delights with you in so many ways.

Connector 64. Consolidation:

"I've come to know my being as an immediate balance between my desires and those of the entities around me. That balance is created in the present and is essential for life's existence."

--Greenfield, Massachusetts workshop participant

Before continuing on to the next section, write what you feel to be the three most important points of this section.

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Supplemental Reading: The Secret Life of Planet Earth in HOW NATURE WORKS.

NOTES

NOTES •

DISCOVERING

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, to see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

--Thoreau

Each natural entity is unique unto itself and has its own special qualities. This chapter enables you to find them.

Meet The Area: Locate the overall and local moods of a natural area *that most strongly call to you* and for each of them Sense-Enjoy-Validate-Match-Resonate-Appreciate-Trust-Celebrate (SEVMRATC).

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 65. Natural Values:

1. In writing, give an example of how through affinity relationships, the global life community exists by organizing, perpetuating and regenerating itself. For example: how a scarred landscape heals itself back to its original state. Show how your existence is part of this process, that you and Nature are one. For example: how a bruise on your body heals itself back to its original state.

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2. List the qualities of a person whom you strongly admire. For each quality find an entity in Nature that also exhibits this quality. For example: tenacious-snapping turtle, giving-Sun, determined-coyote.

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3. In this area's natural entities, find examples of skills, beauty, survival, intelligence, dependability, creativity, ethics, power, friendliness, honesty, nurturing, warmth, cooperation, love, loyalty, independence, trust, freedom or other positive human values, aspirations or aesthetics that natural entities contain. For example: "Granite is strong and dependable."

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4. Write three sentences about each of three different entities in this natural area. Show how each entity contains at least one of the above values, or some other value, and give your reason for thinking this. For example, with respect to granite you might write: "*Granite* is *dependable* because *it maintains itself during winter and summer*." As shown in this example, be sure to use the structure ___(natural entity)___ is ___(value)___ because ___(explanation)___.

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5. Nature is in you. Since your inner Nature and overall Nature are an unbroken continuum, insert *yourself* in the sentences you wrote by substituting the word I for the natural entity appearing in the sentence. *Because you are Nature, natural aspects of yourself fit the description you have written.* For example, change the sample sentence about granite to read: "I am dependable because I maintain myself during winter and summer."

6. Validate the sentence about yourself by saying it aloud and then writing: "It is true that I am _____. Substantiate this truth by finding small examples of it in yourself. Check its validity by getting the reactions of others to it. SEVMRATC this truth.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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7. If you can't comfortably do #6, you have probably discovered an area of your natural self that has been hurt, lost or buried in your upbringing. Work on regenerating these lost areas. They still exist in your Nature, but your modern thinking has been trained to overwhelm them or feel uncomfortable experiencing them.

If you come up with negatives about Nature, remember that you feel negatively because some affinity of yours that would like to be satisfied is being frustrated. Attempt to locate that affinity and consummate it in other ways (see Connector 48).

Thank this place and its entities for their qualities, and for sharing their qualities with you.

Connector 66. Original Givers:

Make a list of 10 plants, animals and minerals that you like. Write down what outstanding skills, talents, or values each of these entities have. For example:

Fox.....cleverness, adeptness, nimbleness
Poison Ivy.....self protection, climbs trees
Marble.....strength and beauty
Water...flowing, thirst quenching, waves, cooling, floating

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Find examples of each of these skills and talents in yourself and others. They are there somewhere because you and Nature are one and the qualities of each of these beings lie in you.

Humanity is a recent arrival on Earth in comparison to most natural entities. We are an expression of Nature. *All of our natural abilities come to us from the natural world.*

In writing thank each of the entities you listed for developing their abilities and for giving to you and others the gifts of these abilities.

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Connector 67. Nurturing: Role play natural gifting.

Have one person role play a real or imagined personal problem, stating how it makes them feel.

Have other people role play natural entities and their gifts. In their role have them interact with the troubled person by helpfully sharing or donating their attributes with him/her whenever possible.

Have each person write or discuss how they feel at the end of this activity.

A person's Nature can be thought to be like a living beach ball which is wholly shaped by the natural world's affinities. When the ball is injured one can either stop the leak with a patch, or continually pump into the ball more support from other sources. Both ways effectively heal the injury in that each keeps the ball in shape. By being in shape, the ball itself may with time find the regenerative strengths to heal itself.

Connector 68. Surviving Communally:

Have the members of a group make masks or labels for their favorite natural being. Each member wears them and becomes that being, i.e. a thistle, raccoon, water, rock, etc.

Each *being* introduces itself and briefly talks about their survival habits, needs and feelings. Then, have the group do a "Low Ropes Game" sharing their talents to reach the common goal. For example: mark an 18 inch square on the floor and have 8 to 10 people (beings) work together to each have one foot in the square and no other foot on the floor. Group members make their calls or sounds to call attention to how they feel. SEVMRATC at the outcome.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 69. Connecting Musically:

Sit quietly in a natural area listening as hard as possible to every sound. Attempt to know these sounds as a musical composition. The basic rhythm is the tension-relaxation beat set by your heart. Weave into your heart's rhythm each additional sound, rhythm, or melody that you hear or feel. You now hear a symphony. SEVMRATC.

Become a musician: attempt to hum the enchanting song which Nature composes. This is the Nature of music.

Connector 70. Connecting Through Dance:

In the pulse and flow of the natural entities here, move and flex your body to imitate, resonate or harmonize with their forms, shapes, directions and motions. Join the rhythms of your breath, heart and eyelash wink with those of the wind, water, and life community pulse. Your moving connection with natural entities is the Nature of Dance. SEVMRATC this feeling.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 71. Connecting Artistically:

SEVMRATC this natural area. In color draw representations of the shapes, forms, colors, images, feelings, sensations and thoughts that this area touches in you. Share your drawing with others. It communicates to them the Nature of this area. That is the Nature of art.

Connector 72. Connecting With Nature's Peace: Some people picture the natural world as a competitive, bloody, tooth and claw affair, but when you visit a natural area it is usually peaceful, serene and harmonic, not a war. To offset its alleged warlike qualities, learn its peace from humility, humbleness and humor.

All of these words are derivations of the word *humus*, which, you will remember also gives rise to the word *human*. *Humus* is rich bacterial soil, *humility* means learning from Nature, and *human* means sprung from the soil.

Alone, or in a circle with others, sing or recite the Shaker song SIMPLE GIFTS:

"Tis a gift to be simple, tis a gift to be free,
Tis a gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we have come to the place that is right,
We will live in the valley of love and delight.

"When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shall not be ashamed,
To turn, to turn, to turn is our delight,
And by turning, turning, we come round right."

In this natural setting, with a circle of friends, turn and look for examples of what this song describes.

If you are with friends have each member of the circle look at the people in the circle for a minute and locate in them simplicity and turning. Then, as a group, turn and look out of the circle into the natural world. Locate simplicity and turning there.

In what ways can you "turn to come round right?"

Give yourself an attractive simple gift of some natural entity or process from this area. Write down why you like the gift; what aspects of you the gift attracts; why you deserve to have it.

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Connector 73. Connecting With Nature's Continuum:

Put a six inch stick in your hand and make a fist around it so that a three inch portion of the stick protrudes from your fist. Let the stick represent the continuity and "stick"-togetherness of Nature, while your fist represents your *being*.

Push the outside portion of the stick and note how you can feel the motion inside your fist. Now move your fist's fingers against the stick and note how the stick moves outside.

Nature inside influences Nature outside and vice versa. When you feel you understand this concept, SEVMRATC the feeling.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Remember this concept when you see people or natural areas being treated badly. One doesn't happen without the other being effected. Remember, too, that kind, caring acts also touch inside and outside.

Connector 74. Connecting With Nature In People: Much of what we know and believe was learned with other people's approval. People are vital to relearning or reinforcing natural aspects of who we are.

Enjoy a friend's inner Nature. Get together with a companion and play the game "Who are you?".

1. Sit face to face with a person with whom you feel comfortable, and hold hands with them. Look into each other's eyes and for five minutes ask your companion, "Who are you?" to which they will reply each time you ask: "I am _____." They fill in the blank verbally with whatever concepts they believe are representative of themselves. For example: "I am a 'concerned person,' 'musician,' 'habitat,' 'survival desire,' etc."

Only respond to your partner by saying "thank you" to each statement he or she offers. In their statements, they should integrate concepts and affinities with which they feel comfortable and which represent their Nature.

Then switch roles with your companion and for five minutes they ask the question and you become the "I am" person.

2. Upon completing this part of the activity, reverse the process. For five minutes say to your partner: "You are _____," repeating to your partner what they told you about themselves and what you sense them to be. Have them again say, "thank you" for each thing you tell them. Then switch roles.

3. Locate the natural qualities <u>of your friend</u> *that most strongly call to you* and for each of them SEVMRATC. *Then do the same thing for the natural qualities that you find in yourself.*

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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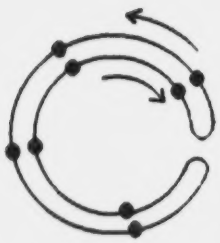

The Connecting Circle: If you are with a group, in the rythum of a heart like drum beat form two lines facing each other and bend the line into a circle as shown. Hold hands with the opposite person for five seconds and look at their face and eyes as if they were windows. Find the Nature in and of each other, then say to each other, "I know you (or love you) as of old." Then move right to the next person and repeat the process until all persons have had contact with each other.

For further interpersonal activities read CREATING HUMANE CLIMATES OUTDOORS: A PEOPLE SKILLS PRIMER by Clifford E. Knapp, ERIC/CRESS Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325 ($6.50).

Connector 75. What Are You?: Each living being intimately connects with its environment. What determines where you or any natural organism begin and your environment ends?

1. In your natural area ask the above question of yourself and of the organisms surrounding you. Compare the ideas you create with the following statement:

An organism can identify itself because it connects with the unified molecular (genetic) affinity relationships which grew it.

2. Know yourself as your DNA or genes know themselves. Pinch yourself and note that you are the only entity in the world that gets two sensations from doing so. One sensation is in your pinched skin, the other in your fingers. You are connected to you.

3. Role play your genetic makeup. Imagine yourself being your own DNA molecules. Feel strongly together and united. Gather friends and materials that attract you in this area and attach yourself to them and them to each other like a spider web. Sense that attachment and note that if you cause one entity to shake, the shaking will pass around and return to you. You are held together like an organism. SEVMRATC the feeling.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Note that forests, prairies, ecosystems and Planet Earth act like organisms. They are immense extensions of the microorganism-mineral community that grows them. Microorganisms could be considered their DNA.

Connector 76. Respecting Those Connected:

Connect with Nature by revering persons who are or were deeply connected with Nature. Moses and Jesus of Nazareth are such revered people. They constantly retreated to the wilderness seeking rejuvenation and knowledge. Others who may be helpful and deserve recognition are:

Saint Hildegard of Bingen
Saint Francis of Assisi
Saint John of Yosemite (pending)
Saint Henry of Walden (pending)
Saint Luther of the Gardens (pending)
Saint Aldo of the Wildland (pending)
Saint Edward of the Desert (pending)

Connect with Nature; help those pending receive Sainthood. Write petitions to the powers that be. Make it happen. But you don't have to wait for approval from the powerful. Empower yourself. Make any of these individuals or others your personal saint now and reap the benefits.

Connector 77. Speaking Accurately:

Capture the connectedness of natural entities to humanity. Call any and all natural entities *people* or *mortals* as well as *beings*. Thus rocks could be addressed as *rock mortals*, beavers as *beaver people*. John Muir was known to do this continuously. If you are criticized for doing it say "I learned it from John Muir. It was good enough for him and its good enough for me." In this way you begin to effect change. You introduce a new outlook into the culture. John Muir would applaud.

Connector 78. Respecting Life:

Thank this place and its entities for their qualities, and for sharing their qualities with you.

Connector 79. Consolidation:

"I feel that I am in every way an expression of Nature. Except for my cultural conditioning and my trained feelings about myself, my qualities are Nature's qualities."

--Albany, Georgia workshop participant

Before continuing on to the next section, write down what you feel to be the three most important points of this section.

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Supplemental Reading: The study guides of HOW NATURE WORKS.

NOTES

UNIFYING

"Imagine the universe beautiful and just and perfect, then be sure of one thing: The 'desire to be' has imagined it quite a bit better than you have."

--Unknown

Except for the way we are culturally trained to think and act, Nature and modern people are one in the same. To further connect with Nature, this chapter reinforces that oneness.

Visit a natural area containing a beaver colony or a nest producing animal.

Meet The Area: Locate the overall and local moods of this beaver colony *that most strongly call to you* and for each of them Sense-Enjoy-Validate-Match-Resonate-Appreciate-Trust and Celebrate (SEVMRATC).

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 80. The Fabric Of Balance: Over the aeons, beavers' bodies and activities have responded to the many signals they receive from Nature within and without.

For 1/2 hour or more, attempt to imitate the beaver's activities as you see them or know them to be.

Beavers utilize techniques and technologies to create a built environment which involves dams, shelters, trails and tree cutting. Their activities restrain flooding, control erosion and create new meadows and habitats sustaining the local and global life community.

Genetic and global affinities regulate beaver activity so that beavers balance with the natural world and each other. Over time, they strengthen the life communities that support them.

Unify with the beaver by imaginatively becoming extremely small, going into a beaver's center and then growing into every part of the beaver.

As a beaver, SEVMRATC each place that shows indications of beaver activity. Sense or imagine the genetic or environmental affinities limiting a beaver's activities.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Write how you might organize your life to live in a more balanced way within and without. What new affinity bonds would you like to form?

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Thank the beaver colony for being, for contributing to the natural world's balance.

Connector 81. Being A Hologram:

Read the following dream and write how it makes you feel:

After we discussed natural intelligence, I imagined last night that I was the natural world. I was a wilderness, I was perfect, I was intelligent and alive. What a great feeling that was. It got even better. I grew bigger and bigger until I became the whole global life community. I was Planet Earth and I was still alive. I felt just like myself except I couldn't talk or think as usual. But I could sense and feel. I felt I was the Planet.

If I got too hot, I'd cool myself by enlarging my cloud cover to reflect heat; I'd get rid of heat-blanketing carbon dioxide by burying it; I'd enlarge my oceans, or create storms or move my glaciers south.

If the air felt stuffy, I'd swallow carbon dioxide and exhale fresh oxygen. If my oceans got too salty, I'd crystalize out the salt by moving my continents to form warm shallow evaporating seas. If I was hungry or thirsty, I'd eat sunshine or think up a storm. It was weird, but it felt strong and right. I felt content; I enjoyed living; I felt peaceful.

Write why you think modern thinking should respect the sense and feelings of this dream but instead usually rejects them.

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Write what Kahlil Gibran conveys to you when he says: "Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror."

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Connector 82. Natural Life:

Read aloud the 53 senses in the Affinity-Feeling Network list.

For ten minutes imagine yourself having no language sense but instead feel and act off of the senses listed. SEVMRATC that feeling.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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In the space below write:

1. How your life might feel under these circumstances with respect to fun, purpose, community, time, sense of place, stress and trust.

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2. How would you feel about the natural world if you only knew sensations? Would you be different than the natural world? How?

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3. What connection would you feel between your personal desire to be and the natural world's consent for your being?

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Connector 83. Being Naturally: Some people sense that to live in the "uncivilized" natural world is to dance wildly with their kin, the nurturing, affinity-guided, sanely-paced

global family. They say the dance is an exciting, fun game, for while playing it, each participant has the time of their life to the mutual betterment of all.

Write down if you agree or disagree with this idea and why.

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Write how modern life's expectations influence your joy of life.

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Connector 84. The Fabric Of Unity: People who develop strong connections with Nature enjoy a special feeling of love. They give and seek it from other people as well as the land. They also experience inhibiting tensions when they encroach upon Nature within or without.

When connected people stress Nature, discomforting sensations ask them to act differently. These balancing sensations only relax when individuals behave in more unifying ways. Tensions and relaxations are the fabric of Nature's harmony.

Connector 85. Thinking Like A Temple:

Sense your natural area and list which aspects of it are similar to a cathedral. For example: sunlight is like stained glass windows because it is light from Heaven.

Make connections to Nature from the cathedral's pillars, arches, dome, alter, spiritual sense, quietude, glory, deity, decorations, richness, spirit, incense, authority, community, trust, common good, higher cause, Godliness, etc. Consider the way John Muir made one similar association:

> *"Here is a cascade...glancing this way and that, filled with bounce and joyous hurrah, yet earnest as a tempest, and singing like angels loose on a frolic from Heaven."*

Think about Nature and your Nature being one in the same. Read the connections you made between Nature and the Cathedral. Write about any unifying spiritual discoveries this gives you.

SEVMRATC your discoveries.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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Connector 86. Kinship Unifications:

Imagine a group of Americans tourists, picnic baskets in hand, walking into a cathedral and:

chopping up the pews for firewood,

roasting hot dogs on the holy candles,

strewing litter throughout the sacred area,

carving graffiti, firing bullets and throwing hatchets into the columns,

excreting in the holy water after washing their dishes in it,

telling the Archbishop to clean up the mess.

Nobody would do that to a sacred cathedral because the very nature of a *sacred cathedral* creates *respect* which prevents this from happening.

People living in communities that reinforce their natural senses feel similar reverence for Nature. To them Nature is sacred. The natural world is their cathedral. They respect it. It becomes part of their personal and/or collective ethic and morality.

Connector 87. Kinship Commitments: Identify your thoughts and feelings by marking them from 1-10 with respect to the following statements by people who feel connected with Nature.

10 = totally agree, 1 = totally disagree

*"When we see Nature within or without us being destroyed we feel the pain of our home being torn away from us. We try to prevent this from happening."*_____

"We feel anxious about our excessive environmental and self destructive tendencies because we feel for Nature the same reverence that we might feel for a cathedral."_____

*"My vision is a world so connected with Nature that people always receive the sensations needed from Nature to make globally sound decisions."*_____

"We make taboo defiling the natural world within and around us, like we make taboo defiling sacred things and places."_____

*"We must put the Bible on the shelf for 20 years and during this period learn to know God by communing with Nature within and without."*_____

"We turn to Nature for a sense of place, community, trust and survival. We ask Earth to guide and teach us."_____

*"We think with our heart."*_____

"I let my lawn grow wild as a habitat for wildlife. We cut our lawns to make them fit our subconscious memories of ancient tropical savannahs."_____

*"In the same way that I love my family and friends, I am neither afraid nor ashamed to love the land for I best know peace when I am in tune with people and the wind, the hills and the stars."*_____

"I feel loyalty to the global life community. I gain balance with it by asking it for advice and permission."_____

*"We are dancing the moon up in celebration of dimly remembered connections with our ancestors."*_____

"My life goal is to spend my time achieving personal happiness by making my thinking more in tune with Nature."_____

*"The cost of a thing is the amount of life which is required to be exchanged for it."*_____ --Thoreau

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends to do otherwise."_____
--Aldo Leopold

*"The God of love emerged to create the Earth. Before, all was silent, bare and motionless."*_____ --Early Greek Myth

"There is one common flow, one common breathing, all things are in sympathy."
_____ --Hippocrates

*"Nature is the glass reflecting God."*_____ --Young

"One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin."_____
--William Shakespeare

*"Planet Earth is all that we have in common. It is impossible to damage, exploit or care for each other more or differently than we do Earth."*_____
--Wendall Berry

"One's real, most intimate self pervades the universe and all other beings. The mountains, and the sea and the stars are part of one's body."_____
--W. Harmon

*"Going to jail for Nature-protective civil disobedience is like sex. If you've done it enough you can't remember how many times you've done it. If you can count the times you've done it, you haven't done it enough."*_____ --Mike Roselle

To further connect yourself with Nature, find meaning in your life or in the statements that further allows you to agree with them. SEVMRATC each new agreement you discover.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 88. Unifiers:

Sit motionless in a natural area for 20 minutes and observe it, noting what thoughts and feelings it elicits in you.

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Write if you think the natural world could be considered to be perfection on Earth.

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Write if and why you act when somebody steps on your toe. On your home? On your natural heritage?

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Write your thoughts and feelings about the following quotations:

"The place on which you are standing is holy ground."

--Letters

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"Wherever you may go the least plant may bring you the clear remembrance of the Creator."

--St. Basil

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"All organized beings steer towards the greatest measure of well being."

--Albert Schweitzer

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Connector 89. Asking Nature For Unity:

To make a decision that is unified with Nature, before going to sleep think about being Planet Earth or being in a cave. Make the thought as real as possible and intensify the different sensations that come to mind.

Wait for some figure, entity or fantasy to appear in your imagination, thank it for coming, and ask it any question you want answered. Often your dreams or fantasies will suggest an answer coming from your natural intelligence. Thank them for being and helping.

Connector 90. Speaking Accurately: You are kin to all of Nature.

Acknowledge your kinship by endearingly addressing natural entities as Father Sun, Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon, Cousin Fox, Brother Bear, etc. Thomas Celano wrote: "St. Francis called by the name of brother all animals."

Address natural entities in endearing kinship terms until it feels comfortable, then SEVMRATC.

If this feels uncomfortable attempt to locate the affinities in you it is thwarting. Are you frightened about losing approval from modern people whose lives are often unbalanced and separated from Nature? Which of your affinities are thwarted if you lose approval from others? Are they real or are they childhood anxieties you have yet to outgrow?

Write your reactions to the following thoughts.

"When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure."

--Rudolf Bahro

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"Anxiety is the essential condition of everything that is finest in human history."

--Charles Frankel

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"Each new achievement is a crises in self-esteem."

--Eric Hoffer

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Connector 91. Consolidation:

"It became evident to me that unity with Nature is not only material, but emotional and spiritual as well; in fact the three are inseparable."

--Eugene, Oregon teacher's workshop participant

Before continuing on to the next section, write down what you feel to be the three most important points of this section.

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Supplemental Reading: Dancing in the Green in HOW NATURE WORKS.

NOTES

NOTES

AVOIDING

"Believe one who knows
you will find something greater in the woods than books.
Trees and stones will teach you
that which you can never learn from masters."

--Letters

Because we are educated to know the world through langauge, word and image symbolism is essential for modern people's examination of the past and future. This chapter considers the Nature-separating pitfalls we would best avoid.

Meet The Area: Locate the overall and local moods of your special natural area *that most strongly call to you* and for each of them Sense-Enjoy-Validate-Match-Resonate-Appreciate-Trust and Celebrate (SEVMRATC).

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 92. Separation From Balance:

A thick warm mitten is needed to do this Connector.

Archaeologists observe that originally, ancient humanity evolved and became culturally languaged in the womb of the tropics.

When our ancestors moved from the tropics into the temperate zones, they lost affinity contacts with the nurturing tropical breast on which they originally suckled.

In the temperate zone there existed seasonal changes in temperature and food availability. There, Nature became a potential enemy rather than a tropical friend for the winter climate thwarted affinities and habits that evolved for tropical survival.

Although many other cultures learned throughout the temperate seasons to feed from the breast of the temperate zone, human civilization as we practice it did not learn this. *Instead, modern civilization invented conceptual schemes separate from Nature's ways to introduce semblances of its ancestral tropical environment into the temperate zone.* Modern people began to live in a Nature-separated "glove" that their mentality alone created.

> Place a thick warm mitten on one of your hands while exposing your ungloved hand to the cold.
>
> Blow on the mitten. Kiss it.
>
> Touch it lightly first with your other hand, then with a not burned match.
>
> Pinch the mitten, sprinkle dirt over it, let it touch the morning dew on a wildflower.
>
> Cry tears on the mitten, have it be licked by a warm fuzzy puppy. Pet the puppy with your gloved hand.

The mittened hand senses none of this. Separated from the outside, it mostly knows the world inside the mitten.

The thoughts and hands of modern people construct the gloved, tropic-like environment in which we live.

Even when the weather becomes warm, dry and inviting, a hand living in a mitten for too long may have bonded to the mitten and habitually fearfully remain there.

Prehistorically, for survival, our ancestors, beguiled by their own tropic-like memories and creations created artificial mitten-like environments everywhere. Progress became consciousness constructing bigger and better "gloves" while rewarding and revering artificiality and itself for making survival possible through separation from Nature.

Unregulated by Nature's callings, modern civilization imposes its Nature-separated ideas upon the natural world. The natural world has become merely the source of resources used to make the "indoors." In the name of progress, Natural areas, children, feelings and sensations (Nature) and indigenous peoples are grist for modern mills, causing Mark Twain to comment: "Often it does seem a pity that Noah didn't miss the boat."

Modern central ways of life are like a contagious disease that strikes any culture exposed to them. The disease separates the survival bonds of people from the natural world and rebonds people to modern consciousness and artificiality. The disease falsely teaches that human abstraction and symbolization, not the natural world knows best with respect to survival.

Connector 93. Bonding To Separators:

> List five or more modern entities which you desire or cherish such as money, a car, fashions, a job, hairdryer, stereo, electric toothbrush, VCR, affluence, correct spelling of words, religion, a gun, driving ability, insecticide, your name, etc. Note that Nature can't understand them nor deal with them; they arise strictly from artificial civilization, not natural intelligence.

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Write how you feel when your relationships with these technologies are questioned or blocked. Sensitive? Touchy? Stupid? Angry?

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Write if you think you and others have feelingful bonds tied to modern life. Describe them and how they may have developed.

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Connector 94. Intellectual Contamination:

Check through the 53 natural Affinity-Sensations and locate which of your natural affinities are bonded to modern technologies and belief systems, instead of being attached to the natural world where these affinities originated. For example, hunger is often attached to silverware, plates and kitchens instead of attached to a wild, thorny blackberry bush.

Many modern technologies are socially and environmentally destructive. Do you think that modern people resist changing to more Nature compatible ways because they are programmed and bonded to modern artificialities?

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Average Americans spend over 95% of their time in "mitten-like people-made tropics," such as houses, offices, cars and schools. Unregulated by Nature's balancing affinities, modern people often create greedy, runaway technological needs which create havoc such as pollution, violence, stress, toxins, ad nauseam. Will Rogers noted: "You can't say that civilization don't advance, for in every war they kill you in a new way."

Programming or bonding to Nature-deteriorating artifacts destructively separates you from Nature within and without.

Connector 95. Civilized Distortions:

Check below the answers you believe to be correct with respect to the *natural world.*

True or False *in Nature*?

1. ( )T ( )F 1 + 1 = 2
2. ( )T ( )F 1 - 1 = 0
3. ( )T ( )F Calcium plus Water produces Calcium Hydroxide.
4. ( )T ( )F We live on the surface of the 36,000 nautical mile circumference of Planet Earth.
5. ( )T ( )F Leaves are green.
6. ( )T ( )F The closest natural area to you is your local wildlife sanctuary or park.
7. ( )T ( )F Mount Rushmore exists in South Dakota.

Many people's actions habitually and emotionally conform or are bound to modern society's truths. However, many of our "truths" are not true in Nature. For this reason, each of the above statements are true in modern society, but false in Nature.

1. False. "One" can't be found in Nature because one is static and Nature constantly changes. For example, *one* tree is never exactly the same as another tree, and *one* tree, because it has grown or otherwise changed, is different a moment after it is identified as *one*. *One* is an abstract, divisionary, static symbolization while Nature is always connected and changing.

2. False. *Zero* signifies nothing and there is no place in Nature where nothing exists. There is *being* everywhere.

3. False. Most formulas are only true in static, artificial, laboratory environments, not in Nature where standard conditions of temperature, pressure or anything else rarely exist. In this example, Calcium is seldom found as a metal, it is usually combined with some other substances and must be artificially disengaged from its natural relationships if the stated reaction is to occur.

4. False. Earth is a global life community whose atmosphere acts like a cell membrane and extends far beyond the solid portion of the Planet. The atmosphere is as important a part of the Planet as are the continents and ocean. People live inside the Planet, not on it.

5. False. Leaves are leafing. Like all of Nature, their flowing leafness constantly changes physically, metabolically and colorwise while our modern abstractions usually communicate a static fantasy world that we implement and control.

6. False. The closest natural area to you is the wild, naturally intelligent biological community within you.

7. False. The mountain had a natural integrity of its own that the label "Rushmore" ignored. The mountain's natural integrity was further lost by dynamiting the busts of four presidents into it.

Your education is actually what you remember after you have forgotten what you learned. Write down whether or not knowing that some of your strongest beliefs are falsehoods in Nature helps you to further connect with Nature.

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Connector 96. Sensing A Separator:

Spend 15 minutes in a shopping mall or modern building. This area at one time was a naturally balanced wilderness community.

Locate the overall and local moods of this indoor environment by SEVMRATC.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 97. Recognizing A Missing Element:

Look around a natural area. Try to sense that although every aspect of the natural world is part of you, during your upbringing you have to some extent learned to disregard, demean or conquer it.

Gain Nature's vitality by repeating aloud the word "unity" or "one" quickly enough so that few other thoughts can interrupt your sense of oneness with the natural world. You may then find yourself experiencing the natural world more vibrantly.

Over time, as unifying natural thoughts, feelings and actions become habitual, you gain vital rewards. Your estranged intellect begins to healthfully connect with Nature.

Being less separated from Nature happens comparatively easily in children. They have not been as fully programmed to the destructive ways of modern society, causing Eric Berne to note: "We are born princes and the civilizing process turns us into frogs."

Write what you believe to be the difference between natural senses and feelings and acculturated (modern day) sensations and feelings.

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Connector 98. Labels As Separators: The labels and names we attach to entities often prevent us from getting past the label and knowing the entity fully. This reinforces our separation from natural entities. Very early in life, we learn separating labels as we learn to speak.

Reverse this situation. Make every natural entity you can identify into a question. For example, instead of saying: "That is *water*," or "That is a *White Oak*," remove the labels and ask: "Who? what? when? where? why? or how? is that?" This profoundly offsets separation for as Thomas Mann noted: "Speech is Civilization itself."

Connector 99. Releasing Sadness:

Each person in a group of individuals selects an extinct species and becomes a spokesperson for that species. For two minutes their spokesperson tells how it enjoyed life, contributed to the common good and desired to remain alive. A funeral service is then held for all endangered and extinct species. During this time, people emotionally express sorrow and bereavement from the loss of these life forms. Read Joanna Macy's poem Beastiary in THINKING LIKE A MOUNTAIN by John Seed, et.al. as a sermon for the funeral. Sound a single drum beat as each species name is mentioned.

Connector 100. Unseparated Life Dreams: Long term, what do you want from life?

Write down what life would hold for you if you could make your life dream come true. Does your dream include a sense of peace? natural rhythms and time? companionship? fun? trust? unity? community? place? excitement? equilibrium? family? love? connection with people and the land? Can you find these values while living in balance with the natural world? Does the act of attempting to create balance with Nature contain these values?

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Connector 101. Intentions And Effects:

Write your reaction to the following incident:

A student complained that he attended a Nature-supportive study group which met at a beautifully flowered grove in the woods. To celebrate their love for Nature, the group conducted educational and spiritual activities that trampled the grove so that no flowers remained alive and the ground was impacted retarding further growth. The student claimed that the group had been well intentioned but environmentally irresponsible and they had committed the crimes they were attempting to solve.

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Connector 102. Offsetting Separation:

A powerful, practical, and immediate means to connect the global life community with your daily life is to interchangeably substitute the word *Nature* for the word *feelings*, and vice versa. For example: to express feeling comfortable say: "*My Nature is being supported*;" to express negative feelings say: "*My Nature is being abandoned.*" Learn to develop this art by reading pages 126-129 in HOW NATURE WORKS.

Connector 103. Reality Check:

Since the global life community is essentially affinity relationships, does competition actually exist in Nature? Is what we call competition actually organisms under stress fulfilling their affinities by cooperatively merging with less stressed organisms thereby contributing to the greater welfare? Does death actually exist in Nature, or do organisms merely change life communities? Is death a figment of modern thinking?

Connector 104. Consolidation:

"I discovered that my consciousness was habitually aware of society's ways and people's power to make things happen, but I also believed many destructive, separating half-truths about Nature within and around me."

-- Costa Rica Peace conference workshop participant

Before continuing on to the next section, write down what you feel to be the three most important points of this section.

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Supplemental Reading: The Tropicmakers in HOW NATURE WORKS.

REPLENISHING: 101 WAYS TO HEAL THE EARTH

From IN CONTEXT Magazine, A Quarterly of Humane Sustainable Culture, P.O. Box 11470, Bainbridge Island, WA. 98110. Used by permission.

The unifying themes introduced below are changes in lifestyle that 1. reduce energy usage and slow down the fires of industrialism; 2. protect and restore the environment so that its climate-stabilizing mechanisms are preserved; 3. increase individual participation in governmental and economic decisions; and 4. facilitate a deep personal commitment to caring for the Earth.

The point is not to feel guilty for not doing all 101, but to use this list to empower yourself

and your friends to take action. Find one thing you can do, do it, and then find another. By such incremental steps are long journeys made.

1. Insulate your home.
2. Buy energy-efficient appliances.
3. Caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows.
4. Install storm windows.
5. Close off unused areas in your home from heat and air conditioning.
6. Wear warm clothing and turn down winter heat.
7. Switch to low-wattage or fluorescent light bulbs.
8. Turn off all lights that don't need to be on.
9. Use cold water instead of hot whenever possible.
10. Opt for small-oven or stove-top cooking when preparing small meals.
11. Run dishwashers only when full.
12. Set refrigerators to 38° F, freezers to 5° F, no colder.
13. Run clothes washers full, but don't overload them.
14. Use moderate amounts of biodegradable detergent.
15. Air-dry laundry when possible.
16. Clean the lint screen in clothes dryers.
17. Instead of ironing, hang clothes in the bathroom while showering.
18. Take quick showers instead of baths.
19. Install water-efficient showerheads and sink-faucet aerators.
20. Install an air-assisted or composting toilet.
21. Collect rainwater and graywater for gardening use.
22. Insulate your water heater. Turn it down to 121° F.
23. Plant deciduous shade trees that protect windows from summer sun but allow it in during the winter.
24. Explore getting a solar water heater for your home.
25. Learn how to recycle all household goods, from clothing to motor oil to appliances.
26. Start separating out newspaper, other paper, glass, aluminum and food wastes.
27. Encourage your local recycling center or program to start accepting plastic.
28. Urge local officials to begin roadside pickup of recyclables and hazardous wastes.
29. Encourage friends, neighbors, businesses, local organizations to recycle and sponsor recycling efforts.
30. Use recycled products, especially paper.
31. Re-use envelopes, jars, paper bags, scrap paper, etc.
32. Bring your own canvas bags to the grocery store.
33. Encourage local governments to buy recycled paper.
34. Start a recycling program where you work.
35. Limit or eliminate your use of "disposable" items.
36. Urge fast food chains to use recyclable packaging.
37. Avoid using anything made of plastic foam. It is often made from CFCs and never biodegrades.
38. If your car gets less than 35 mpg, sell it, buy a small fuel-efficient model, and spend whatever money you save on home energy efficiency.
39. Maintain and tune up you vehicle regularly for maximum gas mileage.
40. Join a car pool or use public transport to commute.
41. Write to automobile manufacturers to let them know that you intend to buy the most fuel efficient car on the road.
42. Reduce your use of air conditioning.
43. Encourage auto centers to install CFC recycling equipment for auto air conditioners. Freon is released during servicing to become both a greenhouse gas and an ozone layer destroyer.
44. Remove unnecessary articles from your car. Each 100 lbs. of weight decreases fuel efficiency by 1%.
45. Don't speed; accelerate and slow down gradually.
46. Walk or use a bicycle whenever possible.
47. Urge local governments to enact restrictions on automobile use in congested areas downtown.
48. Enjoy sports and recreational activities that use your muscles rather than gasoline and electricity.
49. Buy products that will last.
50. Rent or borrow items that you don't use often.

51. Maintain and repair the items you own.
52. Use colored fabrics to avoid the need for bleach.
53. Use natural fiber clothing, bedding and towels.
54. Don't buy aerosols, halon fire extinguishers, or other products containing CFCs.
55. Write to computer chip manufacturers and urge them to stop using CFC-113 as a solvent.
56. Invest your money in environmentally and socially responsible businesses.
57. Avoid rainforest products, and inform the supplier or manufacturer of your concerns.
58. Use postcards instead of letters for short messages.
59. Eat vegetarian foods as much as possible. Meat makes less efficient use of land, soil, water and energy -- and cows emit 300 liters of methane per day.
60. Buy locally produced foods, avoid buying foods that must be trucked in from great distances.
61. Read labels. Eat organic or less-processed foods.
62. Start a garden; plant a garden instead of a lawn.
63. Water the garden with an underground drip system.
64. Support organic farming and gardening methods; shun chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.
65. Compost kitchen and garden waste, or give it to a friend who can.
66. Inform schools, hospitals, airlines, restaurants and the media of your food concerns.
67. Stay informed about the state of the Earth; spend time in natural areas.
68. Talk to friends, relatives and co-workers about preventing global climate change.
69. Read and support publications that educate about long-term sustainability (like this one).
70. A school is a subculture; teach your child to insist that it be socially and environmentally responsible.
71. Educate children about sustainable living practices. Make this become the prime focus of school curriculums.
72. Xerox this list and send it to ten friends.
73. Go on a citizen diplomacy trip and talk with those you meet about averting global climate change.
74. Get involved in local tree-planting programs.
75. Join an environmental organization. If they're not involved with climate change, get them involved.
76. Support zero population growth.
77. Support work to alleviate poverty. Poverty causes deforestation and other environmental problems.
78. Donate money to environmental organizations.
79. Support programs that aim to save rainforest areas.
80. Support solar and renewable energy development.
81. Work to protect local watershed areas.
82. Pave as little as possible. Rip up excess concrete.
83. Encourage sewage plants to compost their sludge.
84. Write your senator now in support of S.201, the World Environment Policy Act.
85. Write your congressperson now in support of H.R. 1078, the Global Warming Prevention Act.
86. Support disarmament and the redirection of military funds to environmental restoration.
87. Write letters to the editor expressing your concern about climate change and environmental issues.
88. Support electoral candidates who run on environmental platforms.
89. Run for local office on an environmental platform.
90. Attend city council meetings and speak out for action on climate change issues.
91. Organize a citizens' initiative to put a local "climate protection program" into place.
92. Learn how to lobby. Lobby your local, state and national elected officials for action on climate change and environmental issues.
93. Organize a demonstration at a plant that uses CFCs.
94. In place of TV and the stereo, spend time reading, writing, drawing, telling stories, making music.
95. Live within the local climate as much as possible, rather than trying to isolate yourself from it.
96. Strive to establish good communications with friends, neighbors and family including

learning conflict resolution skills. Substitute the phrase "Nature within me senses( ) support or ( )abandonment" for "I feel ( )comfortable or ( )uncomfortable."
97. Spend time seeing, hearing and rejoicing in the beauty of Earth. Feel your love for Earth; validate your sensations and feelings. Make serving Earth your first priority.
98. Learn about the simpler, less resource-intensive lifestyles of aboriginal peoples.
99. Think often about the kind of Earth you would like to see for your grandchildren's grandchildren.
100. While doing small things, think big. Think about peace, redesigning cities, restructuring the economy, reconceiving humanity's role on the Earth.
101. Trust Nature's sentient expression within you. Pray, visualize, hope, meditate, dream.

Alternatives: For an overview of Nature connected alternatives contact your local nature, organic, holistic health, or conservation organizations and/or read:

The Little Green Book by John Lobell, Shambhalla, 1981
The Power of Positive Ecology, by Jon Naar, Harper and Row, 1990
The Green Alternative by Brian Tokar, R&E Miles, 1987
Diet For A New America by John Robbins, Stillpoint, 1988
Seventh Generation, Wilderness, P.O. Box 5063, Pittsfield, Ma 01203-5063
Living the Good Life by Helen and Scott Nearing
Shopping for a Better World CEP, 30 Irving Place, NY, NY 10003
The Education of Little Tree by Forrest Carter, University of New Mexico Press
Voice of the Desert by Joseph Wood Krutch
Earth Wisdom by Delores LaChappel
The Tracker, The Search by Tom Brown

NOTES

NOTES

CHAPTER 9

SPACEMAKING

"Speak to the Earth and it shall teach thee."
--Job, 12-8

Connections with Nature occur when we make space for them to happen. In this chapter we seek or create such space.

Meet The Area: Locate the overall and local moods of this new area *that most strongly call to you* and for each of them Sense-Enjoy-Validate-Match-Resonate-Appreciate-Trust-Celebrate (SEVMRATC).

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 105: Recite The Following Poem:

I thank you God
for this
most amazing day
for the leaping greenly
spirts of trees
and a blue true
dream of sky;
and for everything
which is natural
which is infinite
which is yes.

e.e. cummings

What feelings in you does this poem touch? How can your thoughts best connect people with Nature?

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Connector 106. Assuming A Natural Position:

Lie down in sand, soft earth or leaves and assume a posture. Vibrate yourself while in that position and note how the turf takes on your shape. You leave your impression on and in it.

Return to this place in a few weeks. Have the postures of other entities replaced your impression?

In Nature, each entity is a statement of its role in the global life community. Each, through its posture, relates to other entities. Entities balance themselves around the stance of the entities which are most vibrantly connected and supported. Such posturing is also found in human Nature.

In two sentences write down your thoughts and feelings about each of the following concepts:

"The work of the world does not wait to be done by perfect people."

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"A good example is the best sermon."

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"The greatest of all evils is apathy."

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"Those that bring sunshine to others cannot keep it from themselves."

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Connector 107. Reinforcement:

Spend half a day or more in a natural area making space for the 53 senses to touch you. SEVMRATC each new one that does.

SEVMRATC Summary: .....

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Connector 108. Finding Meaning: A few days after you have completed this Guide's activities look through your notes and think back upon your experiences doing them.

1. Write down what you think are the three most important things you learned from all these experiences.

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2. Pick the one of the three which you believe is most important, or consolidate the three into one brief statement and write it down. Then SEVMRATC it.

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3. Spend a day in a natural area, going out before dawn and returning after dark. During this day use your favorite Nature-connecting techniques in this guidebook to discover more about your statement in #2.

Connector 109. Letting Earth Teach:

Sit or lie where you are for a moment. Relax. Let your memory take you back to the most attractive time and *natural place* in your life, a *natural area* where you felt most content, supported and secure.

1. Relax. Remember as many aspects of this natural area as you can. Intensify its *color, motion, temperature, form, smell, taste, touch, sound, space, direction, community, beauty and trust.*

2. In color, in your notebook draw a picture or design that portrays the essence of this special place.

3. Ask this remembered place what it would like to teach you.

4. Imagine stepping into this place so that *you become the place.*

5. *While you are this place*, as the place, tell yourself the one or two important things you would like yourself to learn (i.e. let the place tell you the same statement that you made in #3 above).

6. Combine the message you received during this exercise with the message in #2 of Connector 108. SEVMRATC it. Feel confident trusting this final message as an important focus for your life.

SEVMRATC Summary: . . . . . .

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7. Return to being yourself here and now.

8. Thank and honor the place for being, for participating in your life, and for teaching you.

Connector 110. Nature Connecting Rituals: Activities in this Guide that prove especially helpful should become repeated personal or shared rituals.

"The energies, support and ideas of the people in my weekly Earth Kinship Affinity Group assist me in making space for connecting with Nature."
--Unitarian Church workshop participant

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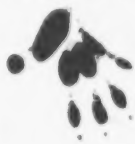


AUTHOR'S OBSERVATIONS

"Democracy works best when a society educates its members to achieve social and environmental responsibility."

--Oscar Arias, President, Costa Rica

Persons outraged about the unhealthy state of Planet Earth estimate that we spend over 90% of our federal budget attempting to repair the damage that modern civilization imposes. For example, the defense budget attempts to further control people whom we have already alienated.

Despite our immense expenditures, things appear to be getting worse simply because much of what we call civilization has uncivilized repercussions.

Have you ever recognized that our corrupt lifeways are caused by modern civilization, not by the natural world, a civilization other than our own?

Increasingly and more intensely, modern civilized life is polluted, violent, stressed, toxified, divorced, criminal, diseased, greenhouse effected, alcoholic, drug infiltrated, child molested, soil eroded, prejudiced, crime waved, competitive, food and water poisoned, illiterate, materialistic, mentally ill, species extincting, overpopulated, habitat destroying, famined, social classed, war torn and acid rained.

Like a Sherman tank operated by a maniac, modern society is dangerously out of control.

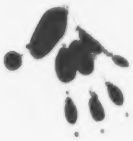
Few among us would have tried to stop a maniac like Jack the Ripper by having him read a book of ethics. We realize that his disturbed emotions, not unethical thoughts produced the insane murders he committed. Why, then, do we so strongly believe in preaching sound ethical and ecological principals to our crazy mainstream society?

Outrageously, the mainstream maniacally kills and maims billions of living beings annually. To espouse rational ecology and ethics and expect these alone to change things should make us question how much the mainstream has disturbed our own mentality.

Modern society is insane because it attacks Nature, thereby injuring a vital part of itself. America needs intense emotional understanding and treatment if we're going to make it through the 21st century.

Nature within and around us is biologically an unbroken seamless continuum. It is built from ancient affinity relationship, bonds that exist in and between all entities. Over the millenniums, these affinities grew and evolved the natural world, the embodying and enveloping global life community. We experience many of Earth's life-giving bonds as sensations and feelings such as hunger, sight, thirst, love, community and trust.

Although many signals from Nature escape our perception, our life affinities exist on all levels. In as many as 53 different ways, we might sense the natural environment because we are a continuum of it. It is in us. Our natural senses are our felt kinship with Earth and each other. They are an unexplored road to personal and global sanity.



As our common culture strives to survive by changing Nature into artifacts, it destructively breaks natural affinity bonds within and about us. Entities, including people, that can't find new global partners are the pollutants that plague the Planet.

Normally, as children, mainstream rips us from our inborn bonds with Nature. It subtly welds our severed, raw feelings to our culture's Nature-misguided attitudes and technologies. Our craving to reduce the hurt from this separation surpasses our rationality. We become addicted to tranquilizing substances like drugs, alcohol, money, pesticides, herbicides, oil, automobiles, electricity, weapons and uranium.

Our upbringing also programs us to conquer all kinds of natural communities. This includes those people who appear closer to Nature such as women, blacks, children, indigenous persons and most minority groups.

We hurt the natural world and each other when we blame any special groups or individuals for causing our problems. *The cause of our problems is our insane mainstream upbringing, not each other.* We act destructively because our upbringing mistreats, injures, conquers and rapes the Nature in each of us along with the natural world. That's the problem. That's why children cry.

As R.D. Laing noted, "Insanity is a perfectly rational adjustment to an insane world." Stripped of nurturing and love from the global life community, acting out of frustrated anger becomes our civilization's Nature. We must address this condition if Jack is to stop ripping.

Modern insanity persists as long as we don't eliminate its source. We are seldom taught what many anthropologists have long known, that when humanity migrated from the tropics, our ancestors, during stressful times remembered the life supportive, womb-like tropics of their origins. They learned to survive anywhere by changing their immediate environment into places that artificially simulated the tropics. For them, tropically bonded memories superceded immediate signals from Nature. Mentality became king. Nature became an enemy, a commodity that we still fervently conquer and reduce to raw materials for building excessive tropic-simulating artifacts.

Separated from Nature, our fulfilling love for natural life has become our insatiable love for substitutes: money, power, and materials. Our legacy is the polluted, violent juggernaut our excesses create.

As makers of artificial tropics, we are the opposite of the indigenous people. Their experiences when entering the temperate zone taught them new ways to suckle from the natural world while continuing to revere Nature's ways. But as TIME Magazine reports (1/3/89), we survive by destroying our life support system, an obvious form of madness as evidenced by the deteriorating Earth and its people.

We spend over 95% of our time indoors. This imprints the next generation to more powerfully and dependently do the same. Falsely, our Nature-separated intellect has become conscious of *itself* as the essential factor for survival. It wars against Nature, enslaving the living substance of Nature as resources. Our symbolism, attitudes, technologies and their negative effects resist change because they are bonded in place by our survival feelings. Fearfully, we learn to recognize our destructive ways as *survival necessities* rather than as *choices*.

By living Nature-separated lives, we teach the more modern intellectual 15% of our brain to reject our natural intelligence, the sensate-feeling 85% of our mind that evolved with the

natural world and responds to its guiding tensions. For example, although we know that electric hair dryers yearly use up as much electricity as is produced by the total nuclear industry, we don't give up hair dryers. Hair dryers and nukes satisfy too many other thwarted natural affinities that bond us to using them. Without loosening these habit forming bonds and re-attaching them to natural values, there is no connection between *information* and *behavior*.

Most of us identify greed as the cause of our environmental and social problems. But *greed* is actually thoughts, feelings and acts that were once controlled by the natural forces which harmoniously balance the natural world. Isolated from the natural world's beneficent controls, aggravated by our eviction from our home in Nature, our "tropicmaking" desires greedily, destructively fuel our lives.

Education that reconnects us with Nature's balanced ways is needed to break the spell.

To cope with our runaway madness we must deal with its source in our injured affinity emotions. Modern insanity stops when with strong community support, we risk liberating our natural survival feelings from their bonding to our culture's destructive ways. That support and hurt can then motivate us to safely re-attach these feelings to the nurturing harmonic integrity of Nature within and without.

To achieve sanity we need rebonding to Nature's balance. Connecting with Nature enables us to respond.

We must stop demeaning peoples' affinity feelings for the natural world as subjective, immature, irrational or inconsequential sentimentality. Survival is an emotion. For survival, our feelings for life must include loving environmentally and socially responsible living.

When we unmask the persons who threaten a healthy world too often we find ourselves. Because the world has never before dealt with our attitudes and impacts, greener solutions are necessary.

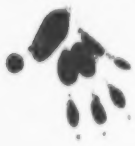
By providing the space and guidance needed to reconnect our natural affinities back to the natural world, we can heal the madness of America. There are many good jobs and a thriving, sane economy available by injecting Nature's balance into our modern lives.

Making space for Nature-connecting outdoor activities is a vital first step in this direction.

* * * * *

Persons who have completed this guidebook and would like to participate in a powerful guided imagery that furthers its theme, will enjoy Chapter 8 of HOW NATURE WORKS. The book also offers Earth Kinship mapping, educational guidelines, evidence for Organism Earth and information about forming Earth Kinship affinity groups.

Also available is the author's 4-credit correspondence course entitled Connecting With Nature: The Fabric of Personal and Global Balance, offered by World Peace University, Box 10869, Eugene, OR 97440 503/741-1794. They also have the dates and places of Connecting With Nature workshops being given by the author.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Since 1959, Michael J. Cohen, Ed.D. has organized hands-on, consensus-based camping trips that explore in depth the ecology of North America. He is an environmental psychologist, founder and director emeritus of the National Audubon Society's degree granting graduate and undergraduate college, the Expedition Institute, and conceived and edited the 1985 Symposium IS THE EARTH A LIVING ORGANISM? He is presently a Professor of Integrated Ecology and International Advisory Board member of World Peace University. His courses are shortwave broadcast internationally on Radio For Peace International.

Mike sings and plays traditional music, calls contra dances and enjoys photography, backpacking, kayaking, cycling and X-C skiing. He continues to camp out through the seasons, frequently speaks at conferences and presents independent workshops. His previous books include **How Nature Works: Regenerating Kinship With Planet Earth**(1988), **Prejudice Against Nature: A Guidebook for the Liberation of Self and Planet**(1983), **Across the Running Tide**(1979), **and Our Classroom is Wild America**(1974).

Through World Peace University's Department of Integrated Ecology, Mike offers 1-5 day seminars, courses and training workshops throughout the United States and Canada. They are attended by outdoor enthusiasts, naturalists and psychologists who are interested in socially and economically developing their Nature-connecting skills. For information contact the Department of Integrated Ecology, World Peace University, Box 10869, Eugene, OR 97440.

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Another way to help protect rain forests is to write your congresspersons. Demand that they let Latin American countries' immense debts to America be settled by having these countries protect their rain forests. And, lest we point the finger at others, let us not forget that all land east of the Mississippi River was a forest 200 years ago. Today the U.S. Forest Service is using taxpayer's money to unnecessarily cut virgin American rain forests in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska at an alarming rate. Before it is too late, let's stop cutting irreplaceable ancient forests everywhere.

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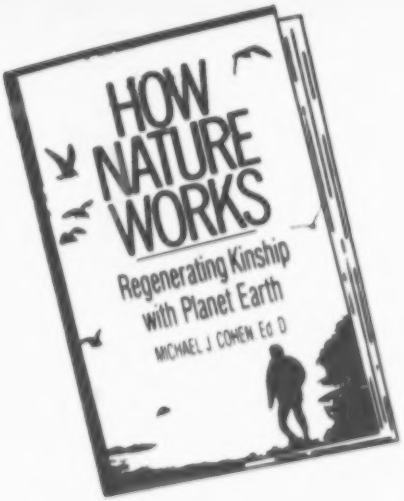

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MICHAEL J. COHEN, Ed. D.

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"I was able to turn off my internal dialog and sense that another world is here around me, one that teaches beyond what I can imagine or express, I felt a belonging and warmth."

"I felt a curious anticipation, felt feelings of peace. I still have the memory with me."

"I was able to sense color with my eyes closed."

"I lost track of time, felt I could taste the plants around me, sensed the weather and temperature more acutely, felt a sense of humility, of being overwhelmed, I became much more aware of form and designs."

Since 1959, Michael J. Cohen, Ed.D. has organized hands-on, consensus-based camping trips that explore in depth the ecology of North America. He is an environmental psychologist, founder and director emeritus of the National Audubon Society's degree granting graduate and undergraduate college, the Expedition Institute, and conceived the 1985 Symposium IS THE EARTH A LIVING ORGANISM? Dr. Cohen is presently a Professor of Integrated Ecology and International Advisory Board member of World Peace University. His courses are shortwave broadcast internationally on Radio for Peace International and his six previous books include HOW NATURE WORKS: Regenerating Kinship With Planet Earth and PREJUDICE AGAINST NATURE: A Guide to the Liberation of Self and Planet.

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